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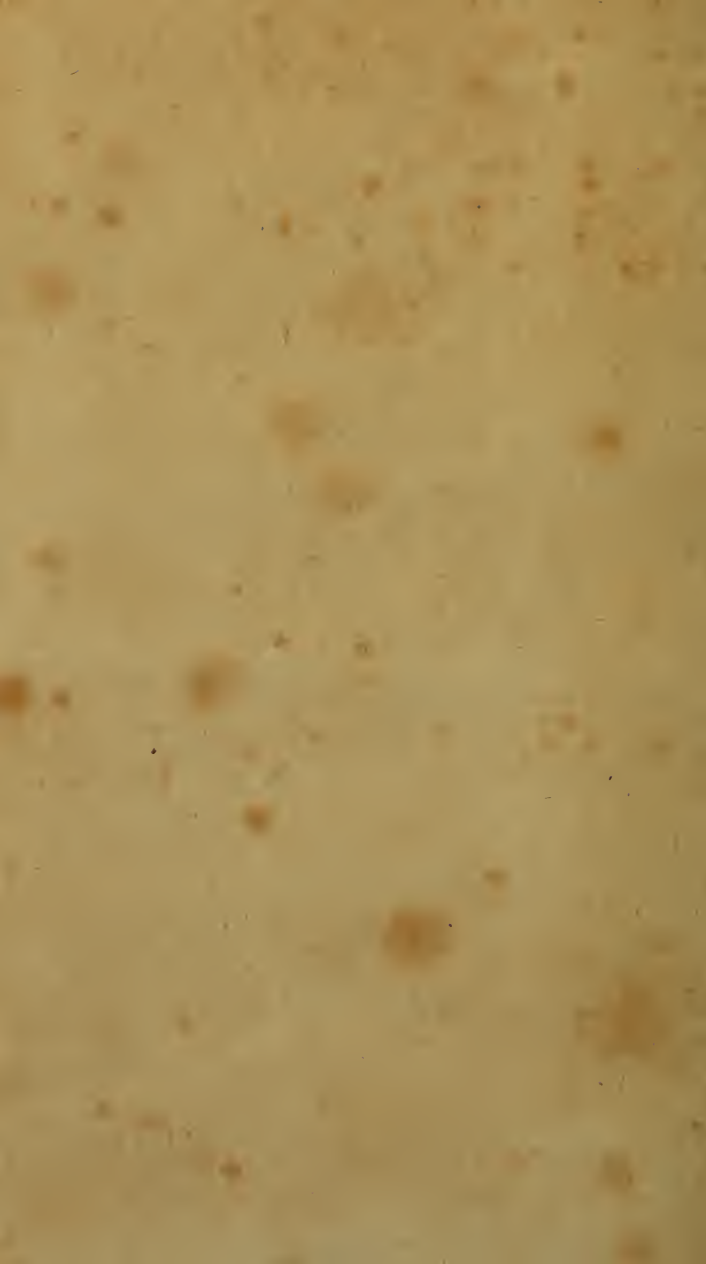
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THE
APOSTOLIC ORIGIN
OF
EPISCOPACY

ASSERTED,

IN A SERIES OF LETTERS,

ADDRESSED

TO THE REV. DR. MILLER,

ONE OF THE PASTORS OF THE UNITED PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCHES IN THE CITY OF NEW-YORK.

BY THE REV. JOHN BOWDEN, D. D.

PROFESSOR OF MORAL PHILOSOPHY, LOGIC, AND
BELLES LETTRES IN COLUMBIA COLLEGE.

Audi alteram partem.

VOL. II.

New-York:

PRINTED AND SOLD BY T. & J. SWORDS,
No. 160 Pearl-Street.

1808.

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

PHYSICS DEPARTMENT

PHYSICS 350

PROBLEM SET 1

NAME: _____

DATE: _____

ERRATA.

Vol. I.

- Page 50, line 4, for *that* read *this*.
97, last line, for *Presbyters*, read *Presbyteries*.
130, line 14, for *him*, read *them*.
160, line 12, for *Acts*, read *Article*.
170, line 7, 9, 12, put *the* before *third*, *fourth*, *fifth*.
197, line 15, for *keen party men*, read *keen parity men*.
312, line 3, for *that order*, read *this order*.

Vol. II.

- Page 81, last line, for *friends*, read *fiends*.
122, line 3, for *have*, read *has*.
169, line 2, for *enlightened*, read *unenlightened*.
224, line 3, for *of the days*, read *to the days*.
247, line 4th from the bottom, for *Holland to*, read *Holland too*.



THE
APOSTOLIC ORIGIN
OF
EPISCOPACY
ASSERTED.

LETTER XIV.

REV. SIR,

I SHALL now examine whether the Fathers of the Reformation in *England* were Presbyterians in *principle*, as you assert.*

Your first proof that they were, is taken from the book entitled, *The Institution of a Christian Man*. This book was published, as you correctly observe, in the year 1537, in the reign of *Henry* the eighth. It was called the Bishop's book, because it was composed by Archbishop *Cranmer*, and several other prelates. You assert, that it is expressly said in this book, that "although the Fathers of the succeeding church after the Apostles instituted certain inferior degrees of ministry; yet the truth is,

* Letter v. p. 219.

that in the New Testament there is no mention made of any other degree or distinction in orders, but only of Deacons or Ministers, and of Presbyters or Bishops."

I doubt, Sir, whether you are not as unfortunate in this quotation, as you have been in several others. The book you quote from is so rare, that I am pretty well satisfied, there is not a man in this country who has seen it. Nearly a hundred years ago, *Collier*, who has given an *abstract* of it, said it was a very rare book. When he wrote his *Ecclesiastical History*, he had it before him, and in the *abstract* he has given us, there is not a syllable of what you have quoted; but much to the contrary. In relation to the authority of Bishops and Priests, he says,* "They [the compilers of the *Institution*] proceed to a more particular explanation of the authority of the clergy, and divide it into two branches;—*Potestas ordinis et potestas jurisdictionis*. Concerning the first, not being contested, they say nothing: the latter, touching jurisdiction committed to the *hierarchy*, they throw into three subdivisions. By the first, they are empowered to reprove immorality and misbelief, and excommunicate the obstinate and ungovernable.—By the second branch of jurisdiction, Bishops are authorized by our Saviour to continue the succession, and perpetuate the *hierarchy*. They are

* *Eccles. Hist.* vol. ii. p. 140.

the judges of the qualifications for priesthood, and may admit or refuse as they think fit."

They further observe, that "a third branch of jurisdiction, belonging to Bishops and Priests, comprehends the power of making canons for the discipline and service of the church." Under this head, "they lay it down for a certain truth, that neither the scripture, nor any Father of the Apostolical age, mentions our Saviour's making any distinction or disparity in the Apostolical or Episcopal character; but that all the Apostles and Bishops were settled upon a foot of equality, with respect to jurisdiction and authority."

Now, Sir, it is evident from *Collier's* abstract of the *Institution*, that you have been led into an error by some prejudiced writer, from whom, most probably, you have taken your quotation. You assert, after your author, that the *Institution* maintains an equality among all the ministers of the gospel. This is not the truth. It maintains an equality among all the Apostles and Bishops, in opposition to the *Pope's* supremacy; but does not give the least hint of an equality among all the ministers of the gospel. This, Sir, shows how cautious we ought to be not to deliver ourselves up to the statements and opinions of others.

You proceed—"About six years after the publication of this book, another appeared, which was designed to promote the same laudable purposes. This was entitled, *The necessary Erudition of a*

Christian Man. It was drawn up by a committee of Bishops and other divines; was afterwards read and approved by the *Lords spiritual and temporal*, and the lower house of *Parliament*, was prefaced by the King, and published by his command. This book certainly proves that those who drew it up, had obtained much more just and clear views of several important doctrines, than they possessed at the date of the former publication. But with regard to ministerial parity, their sentiments remained unchanged. They still asserted the same doctrine. They say, *St. Paul* consecrated and ordained Bishops by the imposition of hands; but that there is no certain rule prescribed in scripture for the nomination, election, or presentation of them, [that is true] but that this is left to the positive laws of every community. [Undoubtedly!] The office of the said ministers is, to preach the word, to minister the sacraments, to bind and loose, to excommunicate those that will not be reformed, and to pray for the universal church. Having afterwards mentioned the order of Deacons, they go on to say, "Of these two orders only, that is to say, Priests and Deacons, scripture maketh express mention; and how they were conferred of the Apostles by prayer and imposition of hands."

Still I must have recourse to *Collier*. I have never seen the *Erudition*, nor do I believe that you Sir, ever have. Like the *Institution*, it is an exceedingly rare book. *Collier* gives us an abstract of it.

“The *Erudition*,” says he, “makes *orders* one of the seven sacraments, and defines it a gift of grace for administration in the church; that it is conveyed by consecration and imposition of the Bishop’s hands; that in the beginning of Christianity, this character was given by the Apostles. The proof is drawn from the epistles of *St. Paul* to *Timothy* and *Titus*.”

This is sufficient proof that the *Erudition* maintains three orders in the church. Notwithstanding this, there are to be found, according to *Collier*, the words which you have quoted, viz. “the scripture speaks expressly of no more than the two orders of Priests and Deacons.” There is undoubtedly a *seeming* contradiction between these two passages; and there is no other way of reconciling them, but by saying as *Collier* does, that “under those called Priests or Presbyters, this book supposes the Episcopal character was meant; for that these two characters were distinct and subordinate, is plain from this *Erudition*.” He then adds, that “this last book does not stand upon so strong an authority as the former. The *Institution* was the act of the whole clergy, and subscribed by both houses of *Convocation*. But the *necessary Erudition* was drawn up only by a *committee of the King’s nomination*.”*

The manner in which *Collier* reconciles the Re-

* Eccles. Hist. vol. ii. p. 190, 191.

formers with themselves is perfectly easy and natural. It corresponds too with the manner of speaking of the Priests in the Old Testament. The High Priest, as I have several times mentioned, is very rarely distinguished from the other Priests. The usual distinction is—Priests and Levites. The Fathers too, in a few instances, comprehend all the clergy under two divisions—Presbyters and Deacons. At other times, the same writers particularly distinguish the Bishop from the Presbyter. The High Priest was a Priest, and, therefore, he and the Priest were generally confounded; the Bishop is a Presbyter, and, therefore, Bishops and Presbyters were, and are still, sometimes comprehended under one title.

With respect to the two books which have thus engaged our attention, it may be observed, that they were intended for nothing more than *temporary* use. The Reformation in *England*, during the whole reign of *Henry* the eighth, did not proceed beyond the state of infancy. Not a single article of importance, but the *Pope's supremacy*, was as yet altered. *Cranmer*, and all the other bishops and divines, who, in the reign of *Edward* the sixth, made so great a figure in reforming the church, were not, till that period, free from the prejudice of a Popish education. They were determined, however, to proceed, and to correct what was amiss in a very slow and gradual manner, according as they should be enabled to determine the true sense of scripture. In

the mean time, the two books in question were published for *temporary* use. Soon after, some of the doctrines of the church of *Rome* were thoroughly canvassed by *Cranmer* and other divines, and pronounced to be inconsistent with scripture, and the principles of the primitive church in the purest and best ages. It is no wonder then, that while the mist in which they had been involved all their lives, was thus slowly dissipating, that we should find some crude expressions, and some obscurity of ideas in the books in question. Read *Collier's Abstract* of these two books, and you will find that to be the case, both with respect to doctrine and government. The mode which they adopted was the wisest that reason could suggest. They proceeded very cautiously in comparing the doctrines of the church of *Rome* with the scriptures, and the earliest Fathers. As they derived light from these sources, they declared their sentiments upon doctrinal subjects; and then they proceeded in the same cautious manner with respect to the constitution of the church. They took nothing for granted, either with respect to doctrine or government, merely because it was entertained by the church of *Rome*. On the contrary, they were very suspicious of the truth of every thing which that church taught. Several questions relating to the orders of the priesthood were proposed in writing to the divines engaged in this business; and their judgments were accurately summed up, and set down by the Archbishop

of *Canterbury*. This transaction should be dated in the reign of *Henry* the eighth, and not ten years afterwards, as you assert, following either the *Irenicum*, or somebody that has implicitly followed that book. This appears beyond contradiction from *Bishop Burnet*, who has completely settled that point.

Now let it be considered, that all this important business was transacted in the very dawn of the *Reformation*, when but very few steps were taken towards a thorough change in doctrine and government. "The prepossessions of a *Popish* education," says *Dr. Chandler*,* "still operated in the minds of these honest searchers for truth; and it was owing, perhaps more to the force of these prepossessions, than to any other cause, that some of them have used expressions, which have since been construed to imply their having some doubts concerning the superiority of Bishops over Presbyters. The *Popish* schoolmen and canonists had been, for some ages, endeavouring to destroy the distinction between the two orders, of which *Bishop Burnet* gives a particular account, concluding it in these words: "On this I have insisted the more, that it may appear how little they have considered things, who are so far carried with their zeal against the established government of the church, as to make use of some passages of the schoolmen and canonists that

* *Appeal defended*, p. 25.

deny them to be distinct orders; for these are *the very dregs of popery*; the one raising the Priests, for the sake of transubstantiation; the other pulling the Bishops lower, for the sake of the *Pope's* supremacy, and by such means bringing them almost to an equal.* The like observation was made before by an eminent Archbishop, who says, "We may justly ascribe the reviving of the *Arian* heresy in these latter days, to the dispensations of the court of *Rome*, who licensed ordinary Priests to *ordain*, and *confirm*, and do the most essential offices of Bishops. So their schools do teach us, a *Priest* may be the extraordinary minister of *priesthood*, and inferior orders by the delegation of the *Pope*. Again—The *Pope* may confer the power of *confirmation* upon a simple *Priest*. By such exorbitant practices as these, they chalked out a way to innovators. And yet, they are not able to produce a precedent of such dispensation, in the primitive times."†

You proceed, Sir, to inform us, that "five years after the last named publication, viz. about the year 1548, *Edward* the sixth called a select assembly of *divines*, for the resolution of several questions relative to the settlement of religion. Of this assembly, Archbishop *Cranmer* was a leading member, and, to the tenth question, which respected the office of Bishops and Presbyters, that venerable prelate re-

* Hist. Ref. vol. i. p. 366. † Bramhall's Works, p. 431.

plied, "Bishops and Priests were, at one time, and were not two things, but *one office*, in the beginning of Christ's religion."

Now, Sir, in this opinion I can see nothing inconsistent with Episcopal pre-eminence. I can subscribe to it without the least hesitation. We all agree, that *in the beginning of Christ's religion*, Presbyters were also called Bishops. Consequently they were different names for the same office. But here lies the fallacy. The word *bishop* in the eleventh question, was understood in the *appropriate* sense. The question is, "Whether a Bishop hath authority to make a Priest by the scripture or not? And whether any other but only a Bishop may make a Priest?" To this, Dr. Cox answers,—“Bishops [in the *appropriate* sense of the word] have authority, as is aforesaid, of the Apostles, in the tenth question, to make Priests, *except in cases of great necessity*.” In his answer to the tenth question, to which he refers, he had made this distinction—*Bishops as they be now*; that is, as superior to Presbyters; *have authority to make Priests*. Dr. Redmayn gives his opinion in these words—“To the first part [that a Bishop, in the appropriate sense of the word, hath authority to make a Priest by scripture] I answer, *yea*; for so it appeareth, *Titus i.* and *Tim. v.* with other places of scripture. But whether any other but only a Bishop may make a Priest, I have not read, but by singular privilege of God. As for *making*, that is to say, ordaining and

consecrating of Priests, I think it specially belongeth to the office of a Bishop, as far as can be shown by scripture, or any example, as I suppose from the beginning." And with *Redmayn* agree *Thirleby*, *Symmons*, *Robertson*, *Leighton*, and others. In short, they all agree, that none but Bishops have authority to make Priests—a few making an exception to cases of extreme necessity. Nothing can be more clear and decisive, with respect to the opinions of the *English Reformers*, than the statement of *Burnet* and *Collier* of the whole progress of that business.

From this view, given us by the above named historians, it is evident, that if this transaction *had* taken place, as you assert, in the reign of *Edward* the sixth, the question relating to Episcopacy would not be affected by it. All agree that it took place before the *ordination offices* were compiled; but *Burnet* clearly proves, in opposition to *Stillingfleet*, that the transaction occurred in the reign of *Henry* the eighth, when the *Reformers* had made but little progress in the great work in which they were engaged; and that of course, even at that early period, they had become perfectly convinced from scripture and the writings of the Fathers, that Episcopacy was the true and proper government of the Christian church.

Yet, Sir, you say, with *Burnet* in your hands, that he maintains, "Such were the language and the views of *Cranmer* and other Prelates, in the reign

of *Edward* the sixth;”* when he, in direct terms, says the contrary. He dates the *questions and resolutions* to which I suppose you have reference, as far back as the year 1540, and observes, that he had “seen a much fuller paper concerning orders and ecclesiastical functions, signed, either in the year 1537 or 1538, since it is subscribed by *Edward Fox*, Bishop of *Hereford*, who died in May, 1538.”†

You must have been misled, Sir, by somebody or other upon this point. You have confounded two distinct transactions, which happened, the one in the reign of *Henry* the eighth, the other in the reign of *Edward* the sixth. With respect to the latter, *Burnet* says, “This winter (1540) there was a committee of select Bishops and divines appointed for examining all the offices of the church, and for reforming them.—The thing they first examined was the sacrament of the Eucharist; which being the chief of Christian communion, was thought to deserve their chief care. And here they managed their inquiries in the same manner that was used in the former reign; in which, when any thing was considered in order to a change, it was put into several queries, to which every one in commission was to give his answer in writing. It is no wonder, if the confusion that followed in queen *Mary*’s reign have deprived us of most of those papers; yet there is one set of them preserved, relating to some ques-

* Letter vi. p. 222.

† Hist. Ref. addenda, vol. i. p. 289, 365r

tions about the priest's single communicating."* I have looked over the *questions* to which *Burnet* refers, and I do declare, that there is not to be found in them one syllable upon the subject of Episcopacy.

This evidence, together with *Strype's*, shows in a satisfactory manner, that *Stillingfleet* was mistaken, in dating the transaction in question in the reign of *Edward* the sixth. *Burnet*, in his history, corrected the error; and *Stillingfleet* never controverted the point, that we know of.

The circumstance, too, of the manuscript, which *Burnet* says he had seen, and which contains the *questions* and *answers* in a fuller manner than that of 1540, and which was clearly drawn up no later than in 1538, as it was signed by *Fox*, Bishop of *Hereford*, who died that year,—affords strong proof, that the business had been begun in 1538, but was not completed till 1540. There is also strong internal evidence, that the *questions* and *answers* were put out some years before the framing of the articles of the church, and the offices of public worship, which took place in 1548. In the latter there was unanimity, in the former there was not. The minds of those excellent men were gradually enlightened; it was scarcely possible that it should have been otherwise. But, if the business of the *questions* and *answers* took place in the same year

* Hist. Reform. vol. ii. p. 61.

in which the articles, &c. were framed, the reformers must have had the light of truth break in upon them very suddenly indeed; for in the former, there is much crudeness of expression, some difference of opinion, and some singularity of sentiment. But every thing has a different aspect in the articles and offices of the church. These circumstances are, I think, sufficient to convince every impartial person, that you have been misled by *Stillingfleet*, or somebody else, in dating the *questions and answers* in 1548.

But notwithstanding this correct view of the whole business given by *Burnet* and *Collier*, you still push forward with zeal to carry your point. You say, "Another circumstance, which serves to show that Archbishop *Cranmer* considered the Episcopal system in which he shared, as founded rather in *prudence* and the will of the *magistrate*, than the *word of God*, is, that he viewed the exercise of all Episcopal jurisdiction as depending on the pleasure of the King, and that, as he gave it, so he might take it away at pleasure. Agreeably to this, when *Henry* the eighth died, the worthy primate regarded his own Episcopal power as expiring with him; and therefore would not act as Archbishop till he had received a new commission from King *Edward*."

There is, Sir, nothing in this world easier, than to misstate facts and superinduce false colours upon truth. Your unlearned and prejudiced readers have, no doubt, been greatly misled by your numerous

misstatements, and your extremely plausible assertions. No doubt, you mean what you say, and are perfectly free from any intention of giving a wrong view of the subject. But how to acquit you from negligence in the investigation of facts, I declare, Sir, I do not know; and therefore shall not attempt it.

That Archbishop *Cranmer* took out a new commission for the exercise of his office, is true; but it was not upon the principle which you mention. It is undeniable, that it was the doctrine of the King, the Bishops, and the whole nation, that authority to administer the sacraments, and to perform all other spiritual offices, was derived, not from the crown, but from Christ. This doctrine was explicitly maintained in the "Institution of a Christian Man," as you will see by consulting *Collier*. And that it was maintained by the King, is evident from a letter of his to the convocation of the province of *York*, explaining the supremacy. That letter you will find in *Dr. Chandler's Appeal defended*, p. 54. Therein the King makes a clear distinction between the *temporal* and *spiritual* powers of the Bishops; the *former* he derives from the *state*, the *latter* from *Christ*. It is, therefore, evident, that what was meant to be given by the King, was nothing more than a *legal* right to exercise that spiritual function, which was derived from Christ, and a jurisdiction relating to matters testamentary, matrimonial, &c. which was derived from the state.

Afterwards, in the reign of *Edward* the sixth, from 1548 to 1553, Bishops were commonly appointed by the King's *letters patent*. "By those letters," says Bishop *Burnet*, "it is clear, that the Episcopal function was acknowledged to be of *divine appointment*, and that the person was no other way named by the King, than as *lay patrons* present to livings; only the Bishop was *legally* authorized in such a part of the King's dominions, to execute that function which was to be derived to him by imposition of hands."*

This, Sir, is the true state of the matter; and it evidently shows how very incorrect you are, when you advance *Cranmer's* taking out a new commission after the death of *Henry*, as a proof that he believed Episcopacy was a mere human institution.

As a further proof that *Cranmer* believed the Episcopal office to be of Apostolical institution, let us have recourse again to the *questions* and *resolutions*. To the 11th *question*, Dr. *Leighton* thus answers: "I suppose that a Bishop hath authority of God, as his minister, by scripture, to make a Priest; but he ought not to admit any man to be a Priest, and consecrate him, or to appoint him to any ministry in the church, without the Prince's license and consent. And that any other man hath authority to make a Priest by scripture, I have not read, nor any example thereof." To the 12th *question*, *Leighton* answers: "I suppose there

* His. Ref. vol. ii. p. 128.

is a consecration required, as by imposition of hands; for so we be taught in the ensample of the Apostles." Durell, in his *Vindiciæ*, says, that having had an opportunity of examining the original manuscript, he found that *Cranmer* gave his consent to *Leighton's* opinions upon this subject, subscribing to each—*Thos. Cantuariensis*.* This is a decisive proof, that the Archbishop was, at that period, a correct Episcopalian.

Before that time, *Cranmer* seems indeed to have had too high a notion of the power of the magistrate; and it appears from the above answer, that *Leighton* also had; and it may be, for any thing I know to the contrary, that all the reformers of the church of *England* had the same tincture. *Burnet* says—"In *Cranmer's* papers some singular opinions about the nature of ecclesiastical offices will be found; but as they are delivered by him with all possible modesty, so they are not established as the doctrine of the church, but laid aside as particular conceits of his own; and, it seems, that *afterwards* he changed his opinion. For he subscribed the book that was soon after set out, which is *directly contrary* to those opinions set down in those papers."† These are sufficient proofs, that *Cranmer* and the other reformers were far enough from being Presbyterians in *principle*, as you incautiously assert.

* Chandler's Appeal defended, p. 26, 27.

† Hist. Reform. vol. i. p. 289.

But as some men, from one cause or other, are very hard to be convinced, I will add more evidence with respect to *Cranmer*.

Bishop *Burnet* informs us, that in 1548, *Cranmer* compiled a *Catechism*, or, “large instruction of young persons in the grounds of the Christian religion;” in which, says my author, “he fully owns the divine institution of Bishops and Priests.” *Cranmer* also published, at the same time, a sermon *on the authority of the keys*, which is as highly Episcopal as any thing can be. In that sermon are the following words. I shall give them according to our modern spelling. “They that were so ordained, were indeed, and also were called, the ministers of God, as the Apostles themselves were, as *Paul* saith unto *Timothy*. And so the ministration of God’s word, (which our Lord Jesus Christ himself did first institute) was derived from the Apostles unto others after them by imposition of hands, and giving the Holy Ghost, from the Apostles down to our days. And this was the consecration, orders, and unction of the Apostles, whereby they, at the beginning, made *Bishops* and *Priests*, and this shall continue in the church, even to the world’s end.”

But even these proofs, convincing as they are, do not close the evidence upon this point. I appeal to the ordination offices, which are the public standards of the church, and which were compiled by *Cranmer* and others in the year 1550.* You, Sir, in-

* *Burnet. Hist. Reform. vol. ii. p. 143, 144.*

deed, endeavour to preclude us from that plea, by observing, that “those who insist on this argument, forget that the *ordination service*, as it *now stands*, differs considerably from that which was drawn up by *Cranmer* and his associates. If I mistake not, that *service*, as it came from the hands of the reformers, did not contain a sentence inconsistent with the opinions which I have ascribed to them.”

Thus you assert, Sir, but give us no proof whatever of the correctness of your assertion. Professing as you do, to have nothing in view but to lead your *Christian brethren* into truth, you ought certainly to have laid before them the evidence upon which you ground your assertion. But this you have not done in the smallest degree. I also think, Sir, that *we* are entitled to some respect. When you say *we* are wrong, you ought to prove upon solid grounds that *we* are so. You can hardly suppose, that *we* shall take your assertion for proof; especially after the numerous specimens you have given us, that there is a wide difference between *asserting* and *proving*. Were I to assert that *you* are mistaken upon this point, it would prove just as much, as your saying that *we* are. Really, Sir, this mode of discussion is far beneath a scholar and a man of sense.

But to come to the point. In the year 1549, not long after *Edward's* accession to the throne, an act passed the *parliament* for drawing up an *Ordinal*. The act being short, I shall transcribe from *Collier*

so much as will answer my purpose. After premising the object of the act to be concord and unity, it proceeds to say—"It is requisite to have one uniform fashion and manner for making and consecrating of Bishops, Priests, and Deacons, or Ministers of the church. Be it, therefore, enacted by the King's Highness, with the assent of the Lords spiritual and temporal, and the Commons in this present parliament assembled, and by the authority of the same, that such form and manner of making, and consecrating of Archbishops, Bishops, Priests, Deacons, and other ministers of the church, &c."*

From this act it is evident, that the formation of different offices for different orders, was contemplated. It is, therefore, reasonable to suppose, that the intention of the act was fulfilled, and that different offices were actually framed for different orders. This was, in fact, the case.

But those who are ever looking out for some slight defect, upon which they may ground an objection, have said, that in the *Ordinal* set forth in *Edward's* reign, the words for conveying the Bishop's character, are not the same as in the present *Ordinal*. Thus, in the latter, the words are—*Receive the Holy Ghost for the office and work of a Bishop, &c.* But in the former, the words were—*Take the Holy Ghost, remember that thou stir up, &c.* Here, say they, the word *Bishop* was not used, and, therefore, it could not have been determined to

* Eccles. Hist. vol. ii. p. 238.

what office the person on whom hands were laid, was designed.

This, Sir, is one of the weakest and most idle cavils I have ever seen. It was first started by the Papists; and the Puritans, although folly is marked upon "the head and front" of it, were not ashamed to repeat it. *Collier*, in answer to it, observes,* that "although the word Bishop is not used, (at the time of imposing hands) yet there is a plain distinction in other parts of the office. For instance, there is an express declaration of two Bishops, that the person present is to be consecrated to their own order. There are more questions put to him by the Archbishop, than are mentioned in the office for ordaining Priests; some of which suppose a superior authority in his character, and that the exercise of discipline, and the government of a diocese, are branches of his function. The Archbishop, and two other Bishops, lay their hands upon the head of the *elect*; whereas, at the ordination of a Priest, this rite is performed by the *Diocesan* with some Priests assisting." It is, therefore, not to be denied with any appearance of reason, that the first and second *Ordinal* are precisely the same as to intention, distinction of office, and conveyance of authority.

As a further proof that a new office was conferred by the *old Ordinal*, I would observe, in the words of *Dr. Chandler*, that, "in the ordination of Pres-

* *Ecc. Hist.* vol. i. p. 291,

byters, a distinction of their office from that of Bishop, immediately follows. They are declared to have, and the declaration implies that they have, in virtue of that ordination, only the power of absolving penitents, and of dispensing the word and sacraments; and *that* in such congregations as they should be appointed to. There is not the least appearance of Episcopal powers, nor of any authority which is not at this day given by the church of England to Presbyters. But in the ordination of Bishops, there is not the least restraint; the words are left general, as they were used by Christ in ordaining his Apostles; and all the ordinary authority, which they were originally intended to express, is conveyed by them without diminution. So that in one case, there is only a limited commission given; but in the other, a commission without any restriction or limitation, and, consequently, extending to *all* ecclesiastical offices, which, in fact, is also intended.”*

Bishop *Burnet* also argues correctly and forcibly upon this point. “It is to be considered, that ecclesiastical orders being from the influence and operation of the Holy Ghost, which being one, yet hath *different operations* for the *different administrations*; therefore, the concomitant actions, words, and circumstances must show, for *which* administration the Holy Ghost is prayed for, since that gene-

* Appeal further defended, p. 42, 43.

ral prayer is made for all; but the functions being different, the same Holy Ghost works differently in them all. Therefore, it is plain from the practice of our Saviour, that there is no need of expressing, in the very words of ordination, *what* power is thereby given, since our Saviour did not express it, but what he said both before and after, did determine the sense of those general words to the Apostolical function. The whole office of consecrating Bishops, (for instance) shows very formally and expressly what power is given in those (general) words. So that a Priest being presented to be made a Bishop, the King's mandate being read for that effect, he swearing canonical obedience as Bishop elect; prayers being put up for him as such, together with other circumstances which make it plain what they are about; *those* general words are by *these* qualified and restrained to that sense."

What can be the reason, Sir, when you revived this idle cavil, that you did not extend it to the ordination of Priests likewise? You must certainly know, that in the old ordinal, the word *Priest* was not used at the time of imposing hands; and, therefore, if the objection has any force in the one case, it has equal force in the other; and then there was no distinction made by the old ordinal between the office of a Presbyter, and that of a Deacon. Thus would the whole ministry of the church of England be demolished at a stroke; and, let me add, the Presbyterian ministry too; as it was derived in

Great-Britain principally, if not altogether, from the Bishops of that church. This, I suppose, Sir, you thought, would be carrying the matter too far.

Indeed, Sir, it is too gross a reflection upon the English reformers, who are acknowledged by all the world to have been great and good men, to suppose that they would compose different offices, for the ordination of Bishops and Priests, if they believed them to hold the same office. Is it possible, that men who had any conscience, would perform the solemn farce of reinvesting the Bishop elect with the same powers which he received, when he was ordained a Priest? Can any one who knows the characters of those divines, suppose that they would be so profligate as to invoke the Almighty for his blessing upon them in communicating those powers, which they had no intention of communicating, as the person was supposed to be invested with them already? Sir, this cavil carries folly upon the face of it, and must ever be considered by every man who has any pretensions to impartiality, to be as weak as it is ungenerous.

As a further proof that the reformers maintained a distinction of offices in the church, they expressly said, in their preface to the old ordinal,—

“It is evident unto all men, diligently reading holy scripture and ancient authors, that from the Apostle’s time there have been these orders of ministers in Christ’s church, Bishops, Priests, and Deacons.”

Still farther. The prayers in the old ordinal expressly mentioned the appointment of divers orders by the Holy Ghost.* Thus, at the ordination of a Bishop, the prayer was just the same as it is now. *Almighty God, giver of all good things, who, by thy Holy Spirit, hast appointed divers orders of Ministers in thy church,—mercifully behold this thy servant now called to the work and ministry of a Bishop, &c.* The same declaration, that the Holy Spirit appointed divers orders in the church, was likewise in the prayers used at the ordination of a Priest, and of a Deacon.

Now it is a consequence obvious to common sense, that when a *committee* was appointed for the express purpose of composing distinct offices for the ordination of Bishops, Priests, and Deacons—when three distinct offices were actually composed—when in the preface to these offices, three distinct orders were particularly enumerated; and when in the prayers of each office, it is expressly declared, that divers orders were appointed by the Holy Ghost; and, lastly, when in the service for consecrating a Bishop, it is explicitly said, that the *elect* is to be admitted into the office of a Bishop—when, I say, these things are considered, it is obvious to common sense, that the reformers believed that Bishops were superior to Presbyters by Apostolic institution, or else they were the most odious hypocrites that ever dis-

* See Brett on Episcopacy, p. 159, and Burnet, vol. ii. p. 144.

graced the Christian church. I do not see, Sir, how it is possible for you to avoid adopting one part or other of this alternative.

It is really a curiosity in the region of controversy, that *you*, Sir, and Dr. *Chauncy*, in this country, and Mr. *Neal*, and others, in *England*, should have recourse to so pitiful a cavil, as to infer from the word *Bishop* not having been used at the imposition of hands, that, therefore, there was no intention of conveying any authority beyond what the Bishop elect was invested with, when he was ordained a Priest; when the objection of the *whole body* of Puritans to these offices was, that they *do* make the office of a Bishop superior to that of a Priest. In their *short table of sundry exceptions*, &c. p. 99, they place it under the article of *defects* in the public service, that “the Priest receiveth in his ordination, no authority to govern the flock, and exercise the discipline of Christ, but only to preach and administer the sacraments;” whereas, in the office for consecrating a Bishop, that power is expressly conferred—*Be to the flock of Christ a Shepherd, not a wolf—be so merciful that ye be not too remiss; so minister discipline that ye forget not mercy.* Under the head of *untruths*, they rank the Preface to the *Ordinal*, in which the three orders are expressly mentioned; and, to crown all, they rank under the head of *Popish Errors*, that “Deacons, Priests, Bishops, and Archbishops, are made

several orders and degrees of ministry.”* [By the way, Archbishops were never considered a distinct order ; nor were they ever ordained to that office ; and that the Puritans must have known very well.]

I think, Sir, I may now, with great propriety, address you in the words used by Bishop *Madox*, in reply to Mr. *Neal*, upon the same point. “ Nothing, sure, but the impossibility of supporting your scheme, and proving the parity of Presbyters and Bishops any other way, could have put you upon this method of attempting it. You, indeed, have undertaken a difficult task, and must, therefore, have great allowances in the execution of it. The sense and practice of the whole Christian church for 1500 years, in a form of church government, so *early*, so *universally*, so *constantly* received, were great obstacles. No instances of Presbyters executing the distinguishing offices of a Bishop ; no example of any man’s being a Bishop one day, and reduced to a mere Presbyter the next, as must have been the case, had a Bishop, as is sometimes alleged, been no more than a Chairman, a Moderator, or temporary President of a Presbytery ; no instances of many Bishops for places where there were many Priests : on the contrary, we always find one particular person mentioned as the Bishop, and sole Bishop of one particular city, even where there were many Presbyters. This being the case, other methods were to be tried, and the very form of

* See *Madox* against *Neal*.

consecrating a Bishop, who had *before been ordained* a Priest, be employed to prove there was, in the opinion of the *compilers* of that *form*, no such order as Bishops in the church—all were Presbyters, and nothing more, not only the order, but the very office the same.”

Will you, Sir, take Bishop *Burnet's* account of the opinions of the reformers upon this point? “In the ancient church,” says he, “they knew none of those subtilties which were found out in the latter ages. It was then thought enough, that a Bishop was to be dedicated to his function by a new imposition of hands, and that several offices could not be performed without Bishops; such as ordination, confirmation, &c.* But they did not refine in these matters so much as to inquire, whether Bishops and Priests differed in *order* and *office*, or only in *degree*. But after the *Schoolmen* fell to examine matters of divinity with logical and unintelligible niceties, and the *Canonists* began to comment upon the rules of the ancient church, they studied to make Bishops and Priests seem very near one another, so that the difference was but small. They did it with different designs. The *Schoolmen* having set up the grand mystery of *transubstantiation*, were to exalt the priestly office as much as was possible; for the turning the host into God, was so great an action, that they reckoned there could be no office higher than that which qualified a man to so mighty a per-

* Madox against Neal, p. 64, 65.

formance.—But as *they* designed to extol the order of Priesthood, so the *Canonists* had as great mind to depress the Episcopal order. They generally wrote for preferment, and the way to it was to exalt the papacy. Nothing could do that so effectually as to bring down the power of Bishops.” After several other observations, *Burnet* says, “*These are the very dregs of popery;*” and then concludes with these strong words: “So partial are some men to their particular conceits, that they make use of the most mischievous topics when they can serve their turn, not considering how much farther these arguments will run, if they ever admit them.”*

It now, Sir, appears beyond all reasonable contradiction, that the compilers of the old ordinal acknowledged three distinct orders in the church, as the preface to the ordinal evinces—that they declared there were, by divine appointment, divers orders of ministers—that they composed a distinct office for the ordination of each order—that there could be no dispute to *which* of these orders the person ordained was admitted, nor what were the peculiar duties of his office—and that all this was approved of, and consented to by the Bishops and Clergy, and established by the King and Parliament. Still it must be admitted, that adding the words—*for the office and work of a Bishop*, in the one office, and *for the office and work of a Priest* in

* Hist. Reform. vol. i. p. 366.

the other, completely removed the objection which the Puritans and Papists made to these offices; and entirely freed those *candid* inquirers after truth from that unhappy necessity, which they thought themselves under, of obscuring what was sufficiently clear to unprejudiced minds.

But notwithstanding all this clear and decisive evidence, we have not yet come to the close of this part of the discussion. As a further argument in proof of your point, you observe, that “when these great reformers went further than to compile temporary and fugitive manuals; when they undertook to frame the fundamental and permanent articles of their church, we find them carefully guarding against any exclusive claim in behalf of diocesan Episcopacy. If they had deemed an order of Bishops superior to Presbyters, indispensably necessary to the regular organization of the church, and the validity of Christian ordinances, can we suppose that men who showed themselves so faithful and zealous in the cause of Christ, would have been wholly silent on the subject? And above all, if they entertained such an opinion, would they have forborne to express it in that article in which they undertook formally to state the doctrine of their church with respect to the Christian ministry? That article (the 23d) is couched in the following terms: *It is not lawful for any man to take upon him the office of public preaching or ministering the sacraments in the congregation, before he be lawfully*

called and sent to execute the same. And those we ought to judge lawfully called and sent, which be chosen and called to this work by men, who have public authority given unto them in the congregation, to call and send ministers into the Lord's vineyard." You say that, "here is not a syllable said of diocesan Bishops, or of the necessity of Episcopal ordination; on the contrary, there is most evidently displayed a studious care to employ such language as would embrace the other reformed churches, and recognize as valid their ministry and ordinances."*

To this I answer, 1st. The question between us is not, whether the reformers of the church of *England* believed that Presbyterian ordination is valid, where no other can be had, but whether Episcopacy is of Apostolical and divine institution? That they believed it is, has been proved beyond all reasonable contradiction; and that the 23d article does not contradict that opinion, is perfectly clear.

2d. It was not the business of the reformers to say in the above *article*, that the divine institution of Episcopacy necessarily precludes from the character of churches, those which have not the order of Bishops. They said enough when they declared, that "it is evident from Holy Scripture, and ancient authors, that from the Apostles' times there have been these orders of Ministers in the church,

* Letter vi. p. 223.

Bishops, Priests, and Deacons ;” and when they said, that “ no man shall be accounted or taken to be a lawful Bishop, Priest, or Deacon in the church of *England*, or suffered to execute any of the said functions, except he be called, tried, examined, and admitted thereunto, according to the form hereafter following, or hath had formerly Episcopal consecration or ordination.”

3d. It is clear, beyond all controversy, from the above declarations, that the reformers maintained the apostolical institution of Episcopacy ; and, therefore, when they say, in the 23d article, that “ it is not lawful for any man to take upon him the office of public preaching, or ministering the sacraments in the congregation, before he be lawfully called and sent to execute the same ;” the words *before he be lawfully called and sent*, must necessarily be interpreted by the words in the preface to the ordinal, viz. *No man shall be accounted or taken for a lawful Bishop, Priest, or Deacon, except he be called according to the form hereafter following, or hath had formerly Episcopal consecration or ordination.*—

Here it is evident that the reformers consider none as lawful Bishops, Priests, and Deacons, without Episcopal ordination ; at the same time they say nothing about Presbyterian ordination, leaving it to shift for itself upon the plea of necessity, or any other plea its advocates may advance in its favour. This, considering the danger to which the whole reformation was exposed, was a mark of

prudence; but I think no impartial and candid man can consider it as affording the smallest proof, that the reformers did not consider Episcopacy as of divine institution, and Presbyterian ordination as irregular, and totally destitute of Apostolic sanction.

I know it *has* been said, although *you* do not say it, that by the word *lawful* is meant, *according to the law of the land*. But I do not see how that can be; for the King and Parliament, who alone have authority to make laws, did not draw up the offices and articles of religion, but the Bishops and clergy assembled in convocation, who have ever been esteemed the proper expositors of the law of God. When the clergy, therefore, declare any thing to be lawful or unlawful, they must necessarily be understood, *according to the law of God*. For the *judges*, not the *clergy*, are the proper expositors of *the law of the land*. This evasion, therefore, is totally inadmissible.

Lastly. It might as well be argued by the advocates for lay ordination, from there being no mention of Presbyters in the 23d article, that the church of *England* does not require so much as Presbyters to lay on their hands in ordination, as that she does not require Bishops to lay on their hands, because nothing is said in that article about diocesan Bishops. The argument, in respect to the former, is just as conclusive as in respect to the latter. But this proves too much; and, therefore, by a rule of logic, proves nothing.

I shall close this head, and this letter, with noticing your quotation from Bishop *Burnet*. The quotation amounts to this, that the reformers did not magisterially pronounce a sentence of *invalidity*, upon the orders of the reformed churches upon the continent. That is very true. It was not their business to do so in direct and pointed terms. But let any man consider the genuine consequence of the declaration of the reformers. They say there were three orders instituted by the Apostles—Bishops, Priests and Deacons. That to Bishops belongs the right of ordaining; and that none shall be considered lawful Bishops, Priests, and Deacons, unless they have been Episcopally consecrated or ordained. Let any one, I say, consider the genuine consequence of these declarations, and then if he can see any thing in the article of a comprehensive nature, I shall not be so hostile to his repose, as to attempt to deprive him of the comfort he can derive from it.

When, Sir, you quoted *Burnet*, why did you not give us the last words of the passage which you adduced? Those words are—“Necessity has no law, and is a law to itself.” From this it is evident, that he predicates all that he says upon *necessity*. Read the whole that he says upon the *Article*, and you will see that all his observations rest upon that ground.

To conclude: It is very evident from what has appeared in this letter, that *Burnet* fully believed

the Apostolical and divine institution of Episcopacy; yet, he had some how or other a way of satisfying himself, that the want of Episcopal orders renders a church only *irregular* and *unsound*; but does not invalidate her ministry. Upon this point, unanimity among Episcopalians cannot reasonably be expected.

I shall now conclude with the testimony of the learned historian, *Mosheim*. Of the church of *England*, he says, "It constantly insisted on the divine origin of its government and discipline."*

* Eccles. Hist. vol. ii. p. 231.

LETTER XV.

REV. SIR,

I SHALL continue the consideration of your train of arguments in support of your assertion, that the reformers of the church of *England* were Presbyterian in principle.

I think that I have already said quite sufficient to show, that you are very far from being correct in this assertion. But as you endeavour to support it, by other arguments, it is expedient, if not necessary, for me to canvass every thing material that you have said.

You observe, that “an act of Parliament was passed in the 13th year of the reign of Queen *Elizabeth*, to reform certain *disorders touching ministers of the church;*” and that “this act was framed with an express view to admitting into the church of *England*, those who had received Presbyterian ordination, in the foreign reformed churches, on their subscribing the articles of faith.”* That there was an act passed in the 13th of *Elizabeth*, to reform certain *disorders*, &c. is true; but that it

* Letter vi. p. 225.

was with “an express view of admitting into the church those who had received Presbyterian ordination,” does not appear at all from the act. You ought, Sir, to have given your readers that part of the act which relates to the present subject. It runs thus: Be it enacted—“that every person, under the degree of a Bishop, which doth, or shall pretend to be a Priest, or Minister of God’s holy word and sacraments, by reason of any other form of institution, consecration, or ordering, than the form set forth by Parliament in the time of the late King, or now used in the reign of our most gracious Sovereign Lady, *before the feast of the nativity of Christ next following*, shall, in the presence of the Bishop, declare his assent, and subscribe to all the articles of religion—and shall bring from such Bishop, in writing under his seal authentic, a testimonial of such assent and subscription—upon pain that every such person, *which shall not, before the said feast, do as is appointed*, shall be, (*ipso facto*) deprived.”*

From this act it is evident, that the case of the foreign Presbyterian churches, and the validity of ordination by Presbyters, were not at all contemplated. There is not a syllable said about either. It speaks indeed of those who pretended to be Priests by an ordinal different from that of King *Edward’s*; but by that was principally, if not exclu-

* Gibson’s Codex, p. 396, and Sparrow’s Collection, p. 118.

sively meant, such as were ordained by the Popish ordinal. But what a valid ordination is, the act does not say. We must have recourse for that to the preface of the ordinal, which expressly makes Episcopal ordination the only lawful mode. The act does not say, that all who were ordained by Presbyters, or in any other manner, should, *upon subscription*, be allowed to hold livings in the church. That would have been a direct contradiction of the act passed in the reign of *Edward*; and, therefore, such an extension should not be given to it.

Let it further be considered, that it was the avowed doctrine of the church throughout the whole reign of *Elizabeth*, that Episcopal ordination was of divine appointment, and then it will be evident, that the act in question could not have been designed to indulge, under the specified condition, those who had received no other orders but Presbyterian.

To confirm your opinion, that this act was intended to comprehend those who had received no other orders but Presbyterian, you observe, "that *Dr. Strype*, an eminent Episcopalian, informs us, that this act was framed with an express view to admitting into the church of *England*, those who had received Presbyterian ordination in the foreign reformed churches, on their subscribing the articles of faith."

You ought, Sir, in order to give your readers a correct view of what *Strype* says, to have given us

his own words. They are as follows: "It concerned all such persons as pretended to be Priests and Ministers of God's word and sacraments under the degree of a Bishop, by reason of any other form of institution, consecration, or ordering, than the form set forth in the late King *Edward's* time, and now used in the reign of the Queen. Meaning, undoubtedly, to comprehend Papists, and likewise such as received their ordination in *some* of the foreign reformed churches, when they were in exile under Queen *Mary*.* From this it is evident, that *Strype* did not mean to comprehend *all* the reformed churches. He expressly says *some* of them; most probably the churches of *Sweden, Denmark, and Bohemia*. By the church in *Bohemia* is meant the reformed church in that kingdom, which was deemed Episcopal.

Notwithstanding these, in my judgment, decisive observations, with which I can hardly suppose you are unacquainted, (for they are not new) you proceed thus: "The conduct of the English reformers corresponded with their laws and public standards. They invited several eminent divines from the foreign reformed churches, who had received no other than Presbyterian ordination, to come over to England; and, on their arrival, in consequence of this formal invitation, actually bestowed upon them important benefices in the church, and in the uni-

* *Annals. Reform. lib. i. chap. 7. An. 1571.*

versities." Pray, Sir, from whom did you receive this information? What can be the reason that you will not give us your authority for what you advance as facts? I have never, in the whole course of my reading, met with any controversial writings, in this respect, like yours. You heap quotation upon quotation, without condescending to give us the chapter, the page, or even the volume; and you have repeatedly advanced things as matters of facts without exhibiting the testimony by which the facts are supported. Thus, in the instance under consideration, you assert, that several foreign divines, who had only Presbyterian ordination, were allowed to hold benefices in *England*. Who were those foreign divines? You have not told us. I will supply the omission. They were, *P. Martyr*, *M. Bucer*, and *P. Fagius*. The two last were never admitted to any ecclesiastical benefice. They were admitted to nothing but academical preferments. The first, indeed, had an ecclesiastical preferment; but he was previously ordained by a Bishop.* Thus, these turn out like most of your other facts.

You still proceed: "Besides inviting these distinguished divines into *England*, Archbishop *Cranmer* and *Grindal*, and their associates, corresponded with *Calvin*, solicited his opinion respecting many points in the reformation of the church, and not only acknowledged him in the most explicit man-

* *Chandler's Appeal defended*, p. 43.

ner, to be a regular minister of Christ, and the church of *Geneva* to be a sister church, but also addressed him in terms of the most exalted reverence, and heaped upon him every epithet of honour."

Still no proof. You, Sir, have said it, and that is enough. But let it be, that the English reformers held *Calvin* in reverence; what does that prove? Does it prove that they acknowledged the validity of ordination by Presbyters? You certainly will not draw that inference from it. The truth is, that they respected *Calvin* for his talents, learning, and zeal; while, at the same time, they censured his arrogant, tyrannical spirit. No one can deny that in the exercise of his ministerial authority, the Roman Pontiff himself was scarcely his equal for tyranny and arrogance. Of this I could give abundant proof, were it necessary. But the fact is too notorious to need it. The Reformers knew this very well; and therefore, when he offered his services, they civilly rejected the offer. This displeased him to such a degree, that although he had before spoken handsome things of the church of *England*, yet, from that time, he began to say harsh things of her; still his talents and learning commanded respect, and he became the oracle of one part of the reformation. The respect then which the English divines paid to *Calvin*, was the result of that principle of human nature, which irresistibly impels us to admire talents and learning. This, I believe, is the whole of the matter.

But you, Sir, will have it, that the Reformers admitted the validity of his orders, and acknowledged the church of *Geneva* to be a true church. Allowing that to be the case, it was upon no other ground than that of necessity, which is the very ground upon which *Calvin* himself, at first, placed it. But, Sir, I doubt very much whether the Reformers ever considered *Calvin* in the light of a minister; for it is very uncertain, whether he received even Presbyterian ordination; any other he certainly did not. *Dr. Leaming*, in his controversy with *Mr. Welles*, positively asserts, that *Beza*, and *Papirius Massinius* declare that he never was ordained. *Reeves* too, in the preface to his *Apologies*, bears the same testimony. *Beza* must have been perfectly acquainted with the matter; for he was *Calvin's* intimate friend. Nor had *Calvin*, before he left *France*, Episcopal orders, if we may believe *Du Pin*. It is well known that he was originally intended for the church, having received an appointment in the Cathedral of *Noyon*, before he was twelve years of age. He afterwards held the cure of *Manteville*, which he exchanged for that of *Pont l'Eveque*; but this happened in 1529, when he was under age. And *Du Pin* positively says, that "he possessed these benefices without being in ecclesiastical orders;" and it is certain that about this time he gave up his preferments in the church, and applied himself to the study of the law; so that it is not at all probable, that after quitting the church for

the law, he was afterwards episcopally ordained. Indeed, it is plain, not only from *Du Pin's* testimony that he was not, but from this circumstance also ;— that before he was twenty-three years of age, he embraced the new doctrines as they were then called ; and he certainly after that, neither *would*, nor *could* have been ordained in the church of *Rome*. And, after this period, it does not appear from any document whatever, that he ever received any thing like an ordination. It is then pretty clear, that *Calvin* had no other pretensions to the ministerial character, than what was founded on the election of him by the magistrates and people of *Geneva*, to be their preacher and professor of divinity. And yet, no doubt, this lay professor of divinity ordained numbers ; and thus, a spurious brood of ministers, even upon Presbyterian principles, was introduced into that church ; and, consequently, there can be no probability of a clear, uninterrupted succession of ministers from that source.

Now, Sir, if these things be so, it is not at all probable, that the Reformers of the church of *England* would have explicitly acknowledged *Calvin's* ministerial character. You must produce positive proof for that ; and, further, if you should, you must show, that what they said was *not* grounded upon the consideration of his ordination being a case of necessity ; but that it was the opinion of the Reformers, that ordination by Presbyters, upon all ordinary occasions, is lawful. I am sorry, Sir, to give

you all this trouble; but as you have brought *Calvin* upon the board, it is necessary that you should help him out of his difficulties, as well as you can.

You proceed to give us another case, which shows, in your judgment, in what light the Reformers of the church of *England* viewed Presbyterian ordination. The case is that of *John Morrison*, a Presbyterian minister, who was licensed by Archbishop *Grindal* to preach, &c. in the *Province of Canterbury*. Well, Sir, this being the fact, what is the inference? Precisely this—that *Grindal* thought ordination by Presbyters valid; but not that his opinion *made* it so. Now, if this be the only logical inference, we need not give ourselves much trouble about it. I have, however, some considerations to offer, to which I request your attention.

1. Whatever may become of this case, it is a curious circumstance, that you should urge it as a proof of the principles of the Reformers. *Grindal* was not one of them; he was not Archbishop of *Canterbury* till the reign of Elizabeth; and the event you have adduced, did not take place till near thirty years after the reformation. How is it possible, Sir, that you could have run into such an error? Nor would it follow, if he *had* been one of the Reformers, and Archbishop of *Canterbury* at that time, and had done just as he did in respect of *Morrison*, that the other Reformers were of his opinion. That is no consequence. The result simply is, that *Grindal* thought Presbyterian orders

valid. But what has that to do with the principles of the Reformers? Just as much as with the principles of *Confucius*.

2. Let us consider what sort of a man *Grindal* was. He is said to have been remiss in his discipline; insomuch that the government took notice of it. *Collier** has recorded a letter from the Privy Council to him, in which they complain of his conduct, and enjoin for the future a stricter discipline, and a more punctual execution of the ecclesiastical laws upon all the violators of them. But what places in a striking point of light the turn of his mind, is the encouragement he gave to what was then called *prophesying*. This was a sort of preaching much in vogue among the more enthusiastic part of the clergy. The result was much confusion, shameful irregularity, and great injury to the church. "The exercise of prophesying," says *Collier*,† "was attended with several inconveniences. It gave opportunity to the spreading of erroneous doctrine. For that purpose, those who were suspended, or deprived for nonconformity, ventured to appear at these meetings. And here they took the liberty to declare against the government and liturgy of the church. And sometimes their satire was played upon the state. Sometimes they glanced upon persons, and ran out into particular invectives. And sometimes the laity undertook the argument, and

* *Eccles. Hist.* vol. ii. p. 571.

† Vol. ii p. 553.

held forth. In short, the exercises at last were remarkable for squabbling, and unnecessary disputes, and failed in the requisites of charity and discretion.”

Now, who would suppose that Archbishop *Grindal* was a friend to these meetings? Yet such was the case. It must, however, be acknowledged, that he did not countenance the irregularities, but drew up a set of rules to check them. But the tendency of them was bad, and no rules could answer any good purpose. The government, therefore, ordered the suppression of them. A particular mandate to that purpose was sent to the Archbishop, but he refused to comply with it. For his disobedience, he was suspended from the exercise of his office for six months. After the lapse of that period, the government offered to restore him upon a proper submission. He made a submission, but it was not deemed satisfactory. The suspension was, therefore, continued. How long he remained in this state I cannot learn; but at length, meeting the wishes of government, he was restored to the exercise of his Episcopal function.

According to *Collier*,* it was *before* the Archbishop's jurisdiction was restored, that his Vicar-General, Dr. *Aubrey*, granted a preaching license to *John Morrison*; and if it were, *Grindal* did by his

* Eccles. Hist. vol. ii. p. 579.

Vicar what he had no right to do ; that is, he exercised his function while under suspension.

From this statement, which I believe is correct, it appears that the Archbishop was somewhat fanatically inclined ; that he was, in some degree, lax in his discipline ; and that he does not appear to have had those views of the Christian church that the Reformers had, when they compiled the ordination offices.

But what shows in a still clearer point of light the irregularity of *Grindal's* conduct is, that by the act under consideration, he went directly counter to the principles of the church over which he presided ; for in the preface to the ordinal, it is expressly said, as has been already noticed, that there are three orders of Apostolic institution, Bishops, Priests, and Deacons, and that none shall be esteemed lawful ministers who have not been episcopally ordained, or consecrated. What now shall we think of a man who could thus fly in the face of his own church, deliberately violate what he had solemnly engaged to maintain, and obstinately persist in disobedience to the government, when, upon a full conviction of the mischievous consequences of prophesying, it had ordered him to suppress such meetings ? It will be of no consequence to say, that he was a conscientious, good man, and that whatever he did, was done upon principle. That is nothing at all to the purpose. A man's conviction of the rectitude of his intention, was

never considered by any man in his senses as a test of truth. For any thing that appears to the contrary, *Guy Faux*, when he was about to blow up King, Lords, and Commons, was conscientiously devoted to that diabolical work; and our Saviour himself tells his Apostles, that they would be persecuted to death, by those who would think that they were doing God service by shedding their blood. The utmost, then, that can be said for *Grindal* is, that his acting from conscience might palliate his erroneous conduct, but it can never justify it.

There is, I think, no doubt that the Archbishop was a well meaning man. In this respect, I do not mean to lessen his character in the smallest degree. But "all is not wise that wise men say, nor good that good men do." He was generally charged with remissness, with a fondness for the Calvinistic scheme, and with over-indulging delinquents. But, in my opinion, the greatest blot upon his character is, his violation of the principles and the laws of the church over which he presided. With this declaration before him, that none are lawful Bishops, Priests, and Deacons, without Episcopal ordination, he certainly strained his prerogative, and the license which was granted, was, in law, good for nothing. The words of the license seem to me to imply a consciousness in him, that the business was not legal. The words I mean are, *As far as lies in us, and we can lawfully do it, and as far as the*

laws of the kingdom suffer us. But if this be the usual form, even in cases which admit of no doubt, then I acknowledge this observation has not the least force.

There is another observation that I would make before I quit this point. It is not clear *how Merri-son* was ordained. There was reformation upon reformation in the church of *Scotland*. The procedure in that country was very different from that of *England*. In the latter, the Bishops and Clergy conducted the reformation calmly and deliberately; examining scripture, and the primitive writers, with the utmost care and attention. In the former, the Bishops and Clergy generally did not reform, and the reformation, in consequence, was conducted, chiefly, by the laity. No one could be at a loss to determine what sort of reformation it would turn out. Riot, confusion, abuse of the Catholics, demolition of venerable edifices that had been erected for ages, destruction of private property, and every species of violence were the consequences. But what particularly respects my purpose, the regimen of the primitive church was not strictly regarded. There was, however, such a sense of the antiquity and propriety of Episcopal government, that something like it was established. Had the Bishops reformed, no doubt, Episcopacy would have been established. But as the Bishops still held the Sees, Superintendents were appointed, who exercised Episcopal jurisdiction; but, unfortunately, they were not con-

secrated by Bishops. The principle of *parity* does not appear to have been thought of among the *first Scotch* reformers; yet they do not appear to have had a correct notion of the ground and nature of Episcopacy. I cannot suppose that it was under this scheme of *superintendency*, that *Morrison* was ordained, for this plain reason—The *first book of discipline* rejected (strange as it may appear) imposition of hands in ordination; and the *license* mentions, that *Morrison* was ordained by imposition of hands. The church was governed by those Superintendents till the year 1512, at which time, all the Popish Bishops being either dead or deprived, the Sees were filled by officers bearing the titles of Archbishops and Bishops; the old divisions of the dioceses were restored; the patrimony of the church was properly applied; and every Bishop had spiritual jurisdiction in his own diocese. But there was one circumstance more necessary to make this a proper Episcopacy. The consecration of these Bishops was, some how or other, overlooked; and, consequently, they were not true and proper Bishops; they were no more than Superintendents, with the old titles, and with more enlarged powers. But in every other respect, the plan was coincident with true and real Episcopacy.*

* See Skinner's Eccles. Hist. of Scotland, vol. ii. p. 204, 205. This author, not long deceased, was the father of the present Bishop Skinner, the pious and venerable *Primus* of the Scotch Episcopal church.

This plan of government continued till the year 1580, when Presbyterianism, sincere and genuine, was established by means of the incessant and vigorous measures, and the subtle arts and intrigues of *Melville* and his party. It is highly probable that *Morrison* was ordained by one of those Bishops; for his license from *Grindal* was dated but two years after the abolition of this species of Episcopacy. It is true, this would not be Episcopal ordination, according to the principles of the church of *England*, and of the primitive church; but *Grindal* was not, it is evident, so strict as the church to which he belonged, and from whose principles, every one will allow, he ought not to have departed.

The inference which may be drawn from this irregularity of *Grindal's*, is not of the least consequence to you in any point of view whatever. You must show that it affords a presumption, that the church of *England* does not place Episcopacy upon the ground of *divine right*; but I am well satisfied that you will not exercise your ingenuity upon that point. If the irregularity of *Grindal* affords a presumption, that the church of *England* does not consider Episcopal ordination necessary, then it follows, that the instances given by *Dr. Chandler*, and lately by *Dr. Hobart*, of men's holding livings in the diocese of *Bangor*, who had never received *any* orders, affords a presumption, that she does not consider orders at all necessary to constitute a man a minister of Christ. If one instance of a license

having been granted to a Presbyterian minister, affords you any room for exultation, certainly, several instances of mere laymen's having been licensed to hold livings, affords the fanatic, at least as much room for exulting in the inference, that the church of *England* considers orders of no manner of consequence. Now, Sir, do be candid, and allow the latter to be as good reasoning as the former.

It is scarcely possible for *us* to form any thing like an adequate conception of the difficulties with which the church had to contend in the reign of *Elizabeth*. Harassed on the one hand by the *Puritans*, and, on the other, by the *Papists*, she had to wink at several things which were inconsistent with her principles and usages. Her most formidable enemies being the *Papists*, and the whole Protestant interest depending so much upon her maintaining her ground, her clergy, while they maintained the apostolical institution of *Episcopacy*, were, at the same time, very cautious of explicitly inferring from it, the invalidity of Presbyterian ordination. They wanted the aid of the *Puritans*, and of the foreign reformed, against the common enemy; and they would have had no reason to expect that, had they expressly asserted that Presbyterian orders in all cases are invalid. Hence arose the *salvo* of a case of necessity, and the distinction between apostolical and divine institution; and, upon one or other of these principles, I have no doubt that *Grindal* acted.

I have taken up more time with this article than

it really deserves. It must be a desperate cause indeed that needs such support; and the urging of this case, taking all the circumstances I have mentioned into the account, is peculiarly ridiculous. The irregular conduct of *Grindal* is brought to prove the Presbyterianism of the Reformers who lived thirty years before this event, and who had declared to all the world, in the most explicit manner, that in the primitive church there were three orders, and that none should be considered as lawful ministers of the church of England, who had not been Episcopally ordained. The conduct of a man who had deliberately subscribed to the principles of his church, both as to doctrine and regimen, and who had directly contradicted those principles, is produced as a proof that they are Presbyterian. Can any thing be more preposterous? Surely, Sir, you cannot be in earnest. Suppose I were to quote you as denying the doctrine of ministerial succession, would it be any kind of proof that your confession of faith does not maintain that doctrine? And of what weight would your belief be in opposition to the standard of your own church? Just nothing at all. Nothing can be more fallacious, nothing more insidious than this procedure? Is there any church upon earth, every individual of whose ministers perfectly accords with her standards in principle? I will venture to assert that there is not. Away then with such an improper mode of discussing the subject. Its obvious design is *ad captandum vulgus*.

When a doctrine cannot be proved by scripture, or reason; when a fact cannot be substantiated by proper and sufficient evidence, then A. B. and C. are introduced to prove it. Men of sense and learning ought not to descend so low as this.

Another of your arguments to prove that the church of *England* does not place Episcopacy upon the ground of divine right, so far as to annul ordination by Presbyters, is, that the 55th canon requires the clergy to “pray for the churches of *England, Scotland, and Ireland*, as parts of Christ’s holy catholic church, which is dispersed throughout the world.”

This, Sir, is not the point in dispute between us. The question is not, whether the church of *England* declares ordination by Presbyters invalid; but whether she places Episcopacy upon the ground of divine right? I have proved from the preface to the ordinal, and from the declaration of the church, that none will be considered by her lawful Bishops, Priests and Deacons, who are not Episcopally ordained; and from the prayers in the ordination offices, that she maintains the divine right of Episcopacy. This is all I feel any concern about; the consequence of this principle is another question, which I am not called upon at present to discuss.

There is, Sir, something very unfair in your management of this subject. The question between us simply is, What is the government of the Christian church by apostolical and divine appointment?

We say it is Episcopal; *you* say it is Presbyterian. To prove that you are right you quote some Episcopalians, who allow, under certain circumstances, the validity of your orders. And although you do not expressly draw the inference, yet you evidently produce these quotations to impress upon the minds of your readers this position, that Episcopacy is not a divine institution, because some Episcopalians who maintain that it is, at the same time do not carry the principle so far as to unchurch Presbyterians. This, Sir, is not a proper view of the subject. Reason as much as you please against the ground upon which we place our regimen; marshal, if you can find them, fifty Episcopalians, who assert, in opposition to the principles of their own church, that Episcopacy is a human institution; but do not fly off to another question, viz. What is the necessary consequence of believing Episcopacy to be of divine institution? This is not the question we are discussing. Men frequently differ about the consequences of principles. Consequences are made out by reasoning; and men reason very differently. How strikingly is this the case with *Calvinists*! Some of them admit without any scruple, all the consequences with which their principles are charged; others reject these consequences, and contend that they do not flow from the doctrines of *Calvin*. Thus also the *Westminster* divines, in their disputes with the *Independents*, deny the validity of ordination by laymen, and

strenuously maintain the necessity of unbroken succession; yet there are some Presbyterian ministers, who, while they assert the divine institution of a ministry, do not carry the principle so far as to invalidate lay ordination. Just so it is with some Episcopalians. They say that maintaining the divine institution of Episcopacy does not invalidate Presbyterian ordination. Whether those Presbyterians and Episcopalians are consistent, is another question.

It may be further observed, that those who assert the divine institution of Episcopacy, must necessarily be supposed to maintain, that a church which rejects Episcopacy, or cannot possibly obtain it, (which is placing it upon the most favourable ground) is *quo ad hoc* imperfect and unsound. For if Episcopacy rests upon divine institution, then a Presbyterian church, which wants Episcopacy, wants a divine institution; and, consequently, in a very important point, must be defective. And whether a conscientious man, convinced of this, can derive any comfort from the concession, that this principle does not go so far as totally to *unchurch*; or whether he can continue a member of such a church consistently with the duty of being a member of a complete, sound, and scriptural church, is a question of great importance, and, therefore, deserves the attention of every serious Christian.

The next observation which you make, in the pursuit of your object, is the following: "Dr. Warner, a learned Episcopal historian, declares,

that Archbishop *Bancroft* was the *first* man in the church of *England*, who preached up the divine right of Episcopacy. The same is asserted by many other Episcopal writers; and this passage from *Warner* is quoted with approbation by Bishop *White*, of *Pennsylvania*, in his *Case of the Episcopal Churches*, in showing that the doctrine which founds Episcopacy on *divine right*, has never been embraced by the great body of the most esteemed divines of the church of *England*.”

Here, Sir, you have shifted your ground again. The fifty-fifth canon has been just quoted to prove that those who had high notions of Episcopacy, or, in other words, maintained its divine origin, did not, however, carry that principle so far as to unchurch Presbyterians. This, I have observed, is not the question in the present dispute. You *now* come to the precise point of debate; and upon this point, if I do not deceive myself, you will be easily vanquished.

You assert, Sir, after *Dr. Warner*, that “*Bancroft* was the first man who preached up the divine right of Episcopacy.” How any man with the ordinal and ordination offices before him can venture this assertion, is beyond my comprehension. I have shown, in my view of the matter, beyond the possibility of refutation, that the ordinal and offices of ordination declare Episcopacy to be a divine institution. This doctrine was then made by the Reformers, a standard principle of the church of

England. After this, the first defence of Episcopacy, upon the ground of divine right, was by *Whitgift*, and not by *Bancroft*. But this is really of no importance. It was needless to write an elaborate defence of Episcopacy, till it was attacked. The first attack made upon it was by *Cartwright* and his associates, in the year 1572, twenty-four years after the *reformation*. They published a book entitled, *An Admonition to the Parliament*; the design of which was to subvert the government of Bishops. An answer was given to this book by Dr. *Whitgift*, then Vice-Chancellor of the University of *Cambridge*. *Strype* says of this book, that "it contained a very learned and satisfactory vindication of the church of *England*, and especially of the government of it by Bishops."* Some years afterwards, Sir *F. Knollys*, a great puritan, complains of *Whitgift*, that in this book he "had claimed, in the right of Bishops, a superiority belonging to them over all the inferior clergy from God's own ordinance."† In 1593 *Whitgift*, when promoted to the see of *Canterbury*, wrote a letter to *Beza*, in which he expostulates with him for intermeddling in the dispute between the church and the puritans. In that letter he says, "We make no doubt but that the Episcopal degree, which we bear, is an institution apostolic and divine; and so hath always been held by a continual course of times, from the Apostles to

* Life of *Whitgift*, p. 33.† *Ibid.* p. 342.

this very age of ours." Again: "You may remember, learned Sir, the beginnings of that Episcopacy, which you make to be only of human institution, are referred by the Fathers, with one mouth, to the Apostles, as the authors thereof; and that the Bishops were appointed as successors of the Apostles; especially in certain points of their function. And what *Aaron* was to his sons, and to the Levites, this the Bishops were to the Priests and Deacons; and so esteemed of the Fathers to be by divine institution."*

It is now, Sir, proved incontrovertibly, that your guide, *Dr. Warner*, was in an error, when he asserted that "*Bancroft* was the first that preached up the divine right of Episcopacy." It was preached by the Reformers, and made by them a fixed principle of the church; and as soon as the church was attacked by the Puritans, it was defended first by *Whitgift*, and afterwards by *Bancroft* and others, upon the ground of divine right.

You next, Sir, tell us a story of *Dr. Holland's* checking *Laud*, afterwards Archbishop of *Canterbury*, for asserting, in a public disputation, the divine right of Episcopacy. What *Dr. Holland* thought, is of no more consequence than what *you*, or *I* think. We ought not to employ ourselves in collecting opinions; that is a very irksome, and after all, a very useless employment. Our business is to ex-

* *Life of Whitgift*, p. 460.

hibit all the evidence that can be produced *for* or *against* Episcopacy. This is all that the eye of philosophy looks for; any thing further may be calculated to catch the ignorant; but can never have the least weight with a logical inquirer after truth.

You go on. "The reformation in *Scotland* commenced in the year 1560. The constitution of that church was formed, as every one knows, on the Presbyterian plan." Excuse me, Sir; every one does not know that to have been the case. On the contrary, every one who is acquainted with the history of that period, knows that the church of *Scotland* was not settled upon that plan. It is an essential principle of Presbyterianism, that Christ founded the ministry upon the ground of *parity*; consequently, if this were true, parity of ministers must be a divine institution. But this principle is rejected by the Reformers of the church of *Scotland*; and there cannot be any doubt, that Episcopacy would have been established, had the Bishops reformed. There was also another circumstance, which contributed much to prevent the establishment of that regimen. By the constitution of the kingdom, the Bishops made one of the three estates of the realm; it was, therefore, supposed that the Popish Bishops could not be legally dispossessed. They were, therefore, left in their *sees*, with all their revenues, and all their temporal powers. But this notwithstanding, Protestant Bishops might have been consecrated; for it is not necessary that Bishops should have tem-

poral jurisdiction, and great revenues. This unhappy error contributed much to prevent the establishment of a proper Episcopacy. But still *parity* was disclaimed, and Superintendents, with Episcopal jurisdiction were established. Bishop Sage, in his *Presbytery Untwisted*, names thirty points of superiority, which the Superintendents had over the Parish Ministers. In jurisdiction, they had all the powers of Bishops, and there was nothing wanting but consecration to have made them such. This, Sir, was the plan of the reformation of the church of *Scotland*, and not the Presbyterian plan, as you assert; and with which (strange it is!) you suppose every one to be acquainted.*

You go on, Sir, in one continued strain of error. You say, "This form" (the Presbyterian) "was retained until the year 1610, when prelacy was violently introduced against the sense of the nation."

I have shown that the church of *Scotland* was not formed upon the principle of *parity*, but of *impairity*; and, consequently, Presbyterianism, which was not introduced in 1560, could not have been retained till 1610. The truth is, that it had no existence till 1580, twenty years after the reformation. And before Presbyterian government was established, a still nearer approach to Episcopacy took place in the year 1572. The plan of Superintendents was laid aside; Clergymen, with the old

* See Sage, Collier, Spotswood, Skinner, and Burnet.

titles of Archbishops and Bishops were appointed; they were put in possession of the revenues of the *Sees*, restored to the ancient jurisdiction, and made, as formerly, the third estate of the realm; and this government (although not strictly Episcopal, because the Bishops were not consecrated) continued till the year 1584.*—Unaccountable, indeed, Sir, it is, that you should not be acquainted with these notorious facts.

A third error is contained in the following words. “In that year, (1610), *Spotswood, Lamb, and Hamilton*, were consecrated Bishops in *London*, by some of the English prelates; and, on their return home, they imparted the Episcopal dignity to a number of others. As they had been Presbyters before this time, Archbishop *Bancroft* proceeded to their consecration as Bishops, without requiring them to be previously re-ordained as Priests; expressly delivering it as his opinion, that their former Presbyterian ordination was valid.”

Surely, Sir, you must know that there is a very different account given of this matter by *Heylin, Collier, and Grey*. *Bancroft*, according to them, reasoned in a very different manner. He said “that there was no necessity for the *Scotch* Bishops passing through the intermediate orders of Deacon and Priest; for that the Episcopal character might be

* Sage's *Presbytery Untwisted*, p. 270, and *Collier's Eccles. Hist.* vol. ii. p. 534.

fully conveyed at a single consecration;”* and for this he cited two precedents in the ancient church. The examples were *Ambrose*, Bishop of *Milan*, and *Nectarius*, Bishop of *Constantinople*.

This is a much better account of the transaction than you have given. You acknowledge that *Bancroft* placed Episcopacy upon the ground of divine right; we may, therefore, very reasonably suppose, that he would act upon a principle that is more consonant to that belief, than the one you imagine he acted upon. The principle, that the highest order necessarily comprehends the powers of the inferior orders, is perfectly correct, and may, therefore, in uncommon cases, be admitted; although, in the ordinary course of things, it will be found expedient to proceed in a different manner.

I really, Sir, am heartily tired of examining your statements. Some of them are so totally different from the facts, and others are placed in so unfair a point of view, that I believe our readers will think me fairly discharged from noticing every minute particular of this nature. But allowing that you have fairly represented the assertions of some Episcopalians, and of *Luther* and *Calvin*, and others; pray, Sir, to what does it amount? Is truth to be tried by the opinions of a few great men? Does reason say it ought to be? Certainly not. We must examine it by its proper evidence; and when it is established by that evidence, it matters not how many names

* Collier's Eccles. Hist. vol. ii. p. 702.

can be brought against it. Were I disputing with you upon what are called the *Calvinistic* doctrines, I suspect it would excite in you some degree of indignation, were I to give you a long list of Presbyterian divines who have written against those doctrines. You would, I believe, cut the matter short, and tell me, at once, that the truth of the *Calvinistic* doctrines is not to be tried in that manner, but by reason and scripture; and if they can be established upon these grounds, it matters not how many Ministers of a *Calvinistic* church are opposed to them. This would be perfectly correct, and no reasonable reply could be made to it.

This observation may be applied with the strictest propriety to the present discussion. If I have proved from scripture and the ancients, that Episcopacy is a divine institution, then the matter is settled; and if you could produce fifty times as many names as you have produced, it would be to no purpose, but to mislead the unthinking. The argument, (if it be not a prostitution of language to use the word in this case) is, however, of a popular kind, and admirably adapted to make an impression upon those who know not the nature of evidence, and, consequently, can have no fixed principles of reasoning.

But if *I have not* established diocesan Episcopacy upon the grounds of scripture and antiquity, my showing that you have misrepresented Episcopal writers, is nothing at all to the purpose. In the eye of a philosopher, the controversy was ended

with the testimony of scripture, interpreted by the practice of the primitive church. And the question concerning the principles of the church of *England*, and of her Reformers, was closed with the evidence produced to prove that they are Episcopal. What a few individuals then may say or think, is altogether irrelevant to the point in dispute. Notwithstanding this cannot be denied, yet I shall consider, in my next letter, what you call the concessions of Episcopalians upon the subject of Episcopacy.

It is also, I conceive, needless for me to take a particular view of the sentiments of *Luther*, and *Calvin*, and *Beza*, and other Reformers; that has been sufficiently done by *Durell*, and many others since his day, and lately by *Dr. Hobart*. It is, I conceive, beyond reasonable controversy, that *Calvin*, at first, did plead necessity for his departure from Episcopal government; and that he did acknowledge it to have been the government of all the churches upon earth, from the times of the Apostles, for 1500 years together.* “But his extraordinary opinion of Episcopacy will farther appear in a letter which he and *Bullinger*, and other learned men beyond Sea, wrote in 1549 to *Edward* the sixth, offering to make him their defender, and to have Bishops in their churches for better unity and concord amongst them, as appears from *Strype’s* memorial of Archbishop *Cranmer*, as likewise from

* Inst. Lib. iv. chap. iv. sect. 2.

a writing of Archbishop *Abbot's*, found among the manuscripts of Archbishop *Usher*.* Unfortunately the letter fell into the hands of the Popish Bishops *Gardiner* and *Bonner*, who, in the names of the Reformers, returned a surly answer to it. "From that time," says *Strype*, "*John Calvin* and the church of *England* were at variance in several points, which otherwise, through God's mercy, had been qualified, if those papers of his proposals had been discovered unto the Queen's majesty during *John Calvin's* life. But being not discovered until, or about the sixth year of her Majesty's reign, her Majesty much lamented they were not found sooner; which she expressed before her council, in the presence of her great friends Sir *Henry Sidney*, and Sir *William Cecil*."†—Had it not been for this unfortunate accident, in all probability, the whole reformed church would have been Episcopal; and, in consequence, the animosity, and mischief which resulted from ministerial parity, have been prevented.

As to *Luther*, "he professes, that if the Popish Bishops would cease to persecute the gospel," he and those of his communion "would acknowledge them as their Fathers, and willingly obey their authority, which (says he) *we find supported by the word of God*." Consequently, in his and their opinion, Episcopacy was an Apostolic institution.

* *Chandler's Appeal defended*, p. 238.

† *Strype's Life of Parker*, p. 70.

And *Melancthon*, one of the greatest characters among the reformed, “lays the blame on the cruelty of the Popish Bishops, that that canonical polity was destroyed, which (saith he) *we so earnestly desired to preserve;*” and bids the Papists consider “what account they will render to God for thus scattering his church.”*

As to the church of *Holland*, it is well known that her divines also pleaded necessity for their departure from Episcopacy. *Bogerman*, the President of the Synod of *Dort*, lamented to the British Bishops who attended that assembly, the unhappy situation of their church from a want of Bishops: *Nobis non licet esse tam beatis*, was his solemn declaration.

It is needless to enter into a more minute detail of the testimonies, which the foreign Reformers have left upon record, in favour of the excellency, expediency, and Apostolical institution of Episcopacy. Enough has been done to show, upon a general view, that the regimen of the church of *England* was formed upon a principle of imparity by Apostolic institution; of the church of *Scotland*, and the Lutheran churches in *Germany*, upon the same principle, but upon the ground of expediency; of the church of *Sweden* and *Denmark*, upon the principle of Apostolical imparity; and that the churches of *Geneva* and *Holland* wished for Episcopacy, and plead necessity for their departure

* *Chandler's Appeal defended*, p. 239.

from it. In a short time, however, they found it more consistent, and more convenient to change their ground; and to justify, by the best reasons which they could invent, what at first they very modestly excused.

Before I close this letter, I shall make one or two observations.

1. It appears from history, that every church upon earth, before the reformation, was Episcopal; and that there were no disputes about Ecclesiastical regimen before that period; for the notion started by some of the schoolmen, that Bishops are not a superior order, but a superior degree of the priesthood, cannot be called a dispute about the origin of Episcopacy. It must, therefore, strike every reflecting mind as a most wonderful thing, that for 1500 years there should have been no diversity of opinion upon the subject of Episcopacy, if *parity*, according to some modern Christians, had been established by the Apostles; or if, according to others, they had left the government of the church to human arrangement. There is, perhaps, nothing about which men differ more than about forms of government. In the very nature of things, it must be so. It may, therefore, I think, be fairly asserted, that it was morally impossible for the whole Christian world to have agreed in the Episcopal form of government, if it had been left to men to determine for themselves what form they would adopt. Upon no principle, it appears to me, could such uniformity prevail, but

upon this—that the Episcopal government was established by Apostolic authority; and that, therefore, Christians did not think themselves at liberty to alter it.

The next observation that I would make is this—that although some of the reformed, either from an unhappy necessity, or from an imperfect view of the evidence by which Episcopacy is supported, or from that pernicious principle, that the government of the church ought to be accommodated to the government of the state, did depart from the primitive regimen; yet, at this day, nine tenths of the Christian world are Episcopal. This, I presume, no one will controvert. Now, although I should not choose to assert, without any qualification, that *universality* of belief and practice in this case is a sufficient proof of the Apostolic origin of Episcopacy; yet, I *do* assert, that when this universality can be traced up to the Apostolic age, that it is a clear and decisive proof of the divine source of this mode of government. Upon this argument I shall say no more at present, as I purpose to exhibit it, in a future letter, in every point of view in which I am able to place it. I have just introduced the observation here to show, that the few deviations from Episcopal regimen, which unhappily occurred at the reformation, are but as the dust upon the balance; and that if we *must* count numbers, this mode of trial, as well as every other, is decidedly in our favour.

LETTER XVI.

REV. SIR,

TO notice all the intimations, inferences, and positive, unfounded assertions in your *letters*, would necessarily extend this discussion to an intolerable length. I shall, therefore, bring to view only those assertions, which are best calculated to mislead the unlearned and the unwary.

What further strikes me as worthy of notice in your sixth letter is, first, your assertion, that the church of *Sweden*, although she has officers with the title of Bishops, yet that those Bishops are no more than Superintendents, such as govern the *Lutheran* churches in *Germany*.

In answer to this, I have nothing more to do than to refer you to your own quotation from *Mosheim*. He is undoubtedly good authority upon this point. He says, "The internal government of the *Lutheran* church seems equally removed from Episcopacy on the one hand, and from Presbyterianism on the other, *if we except the kingdom of Sweden and Denmark*, which retain the form of ecclesiastical government that preceded the reformation, purged indeed from the superstitions and abuses that rendered it so odious."

The form of government preceding the reformation, was undoubtedly Episcopal; and this form, *Mosheim* says, was retained; consequently, the *Swedish* church is strictly Episcopal. For this reason, a Presbyter of that church would not be re-ordained by our Bishops; while a Minister of the *Lutheran* church in *Germany*, or in this country, would be re-ordained; because the *Lutherans*, both here and there, have not Bishops, but Superintendents.

You observe, Sir, that “several of the foregoing remarks apply to the *United Brethren*, or *Moravians*. They, indeed, have Bishops in their churches, but explicitly renounce all claim of *divine right* for their system.” They have then, it seems, by your own acknowledgment, a valid Episcopacy. In this, you are undoubtedly correct. Archbishop *Potter*, when the *Moravians* first appeared in *England*, particularly examined their Episcopacy, and pronounced it Apostolical. Now, this is their own opinion of it, as well as the opinion of the *English* divines. If, then, in their own opinion, it is founded upon Apostolical institution, sanctioned by the Holy Ghost, it must necessarily be of divine appointment; and consequently, as the power of ordaining was from the beginning attached to the Apostles, and their successors, the Bishops, wherever that order is wanting, the proper ordaining officer is wanting. This being the case, if they do not claim a *divine right* for their Episcopacy, and do not re-ordain

those that were ordained by Presbyters, it appears to me, that they act very inconsistently. For their Episcopacy is either a divine, or a human institution; there can be no medium. If a *human*, then it is not the primitive, Apostolical Episcopacy. If a *divine* institution, then it cannot admit ordination by mere Presbyters. I appeal to yourself, Sir, and to Dr. *Mason*, and Mr. *M'Leod*, whether, if Episcopacy be a divine institution, and the power of ordaining be attached to Bishops, and to them only, it is not inconsistent to admit ordination by Presbyters? I am sure your two coadjutors argue precisely in the same manner, with respect to Presbyterian ordination; and, I think, that it necessarily results from several of your own positions. You would all condemn ordination by lay-hands, and would not suffer a man ordained in that manner to officiate among you. But why, Sir, do you act thus? Can you produce from scripture a passage which condemns lay ordination? Or can you produce an express precept for ordination by Presbyters? I am certain, that you would all answer, We cannot; but we can produce what is equivalent; that is, Apostolical practice; and as the Apostles acted under the influence of the Holy Ghost, in settling the constitution of the Christian church, their practice is a sure guide and warrant to us. This, I am persuaded, would be the answer from you, and the other named gentlemen, and from every consistent Presbyterian. Now, this is pre-

cisely the manner in which we reason with respect to Episcopacy. You cannot, therefore, find fault with us for condemning Presbyterian ordination, without involving yourselves in the most palpable inconsistency. You say, lay ordination is invalid, because there is no warrant in scripture for it; consequently, the *Moravians*, and those English Episcopalians, who assert the Apostolic institution of Episcopacy, and yet admit, that ordination by Presbyters is valid, are grossly inconsistent with themselves. But, Sir, our church stands clear of this inconsistency. She declares the order of Bishops to be Apostolical and Divine; and, therefore, requires all who have been ordained by Presbyters to be Episcopally ordained, before she admits them to minister in holy things.

Another of your witnesses is, the *Methodist* church. You say, "In order to swell the list of Episcopal churches as much as possible, the *Methodist* church is frequently represented as such." *Represented as such!* Pray, Sir, by whom? You must mean, *by us*, if you mean any thing to your purpose. Sir, it is impossible that you should be ignorant that we consider the Methodist Episcopacy as good for nothing. It is impossible that you should be ignorant, that our Bishops re-ordain all that come over from them to us. Several instances have occurred in this city. If even one of their Bishops were to conform to our church, he must submit to be ordained, first a Deacon, and then a

Presbyter. This, Sir, you must certainly know. How is it then, that you can intimate, that we admit the Methodist Episcopacy, for the sake of swelling the list of Episcopal churches? No, Sir, we not only consider them as non-episcopal; but also as the most wanton schismatics that have ever disgraced the Christian church. For they agree with us in all doctrinal points, they admit the validity of our Episcopal orders, and they have a Liturgy, taken from ours, with no material alterations. They do not, I believe, often use it. Nor is this to be expected from a people so enthusiastic. Like the Pharisees of old, they *say*, and *do not*. They admit the propriety and expediency of a Liturgy, by establishing one; and they contradict and condemn themselves, by not using it.

You proceed, Sir, to observe of the *Methodists*, that “Mr. *Wesley*, the venerable founder of that church, when he undertook, a number of years ago, to digest a plan for its external organization, especially in the *United States*, formally avowed himself to be of the opinion with Lord Chancellor *King*, that Bishop and Presbyter, in the primitive church, were the same. And in perfect conformity with this belief, he himself, being only a Presbyter in the church of *England*, united with other Presbyters in ordaining Ministers for his new church. These Presbyters ordained the first Methodist Bishops, from whom all succeeding ordinations in that body have been derived.”

All this, Sir, is perfectly correct. Mr. *John Wesley* did as you say; and that in direct opposition to his solemn subscriptions when he was ordained, to his repeated declarations through a long life, and to numerous, strong, and conclusive reasons, which he had published against separating from the church of *England*. But this is not all: *John Wesley*, as appears from the correspondence of Dr. *Coke* with Bishop *White*, was not satisfied with himself for the step which he had taken. Doubts about the validity of the orders of his new fangled Bishops appear to me to have troubled *his* mind, as well as Dr. *Coke's*, who was one of those Bishops. *Coke*, therefore, writes to Bishop *White*, offering to give up their spurious Episcopacy, and to return to the bosom of the church, provided the Methodists could be indulged in some of their peculiarities. But their requisitions could not be complied with, and, of course, the whole fell to the ground. This transaction was an implicit acknowledgment of the invalidity of the Methodist Episcopacy.* Upon these facts it may be expedient to make two or three reflections.

First. The whole conduct of *John Wesley*, as appears from the accounts of this transaction at *Bristol*, given us by *Coke*, *Whitehead*, and *Charles Wesley*, convinces me that *John Wesley*, at the very time that he thus abandoned Apostolic usage, was

* See a pamphlet lately published by the Rev. Mr. Kewley.

not satisfied with the correctness of his own conduct. *Charles Wesley* says, in his letter to *Dr. Chandler*, which has been published and republished in this country, that he was at his brother's elbow all the time, and that he did not give him the least hint of his intention. He was afraid of encountering his brother *Charles's* arguments against such a measure; for *Charles* was very primitive in his notions of Episcopacy. Another circumstance which convinces me that *John Wesley's* mind was not quite at ease when he assumed the Episcopal character, is, that he was evidently persuaded to take that very unjustifiable step by *Coke*, and two or three others, and that it did not originate from himself. He appears to me to have yielded rather to importunity than to conviction. A third reason is, that he was evidently ashamed of the whole business; for the pretended consecration to the Episcopal office was not performed in public, but in a private room; thus realizing, as *Charles Wesley* says, "the *Nag's-Head* ordination, and robbing his friends of their boasting." The last reason for my conviction is, what I have already mentioned, that he afterwards wished to retrace his steps, and to undo, as far as he could, what he had done. Taking all these circumstances together, I am satisfied, that *John Wesley* acted from a doubting mind, if not absolutely in contradiction to his own conviction.

But, admitting that he was really convinced by *Lord King*; yet, I think, that *Charles Wesley's* ex-

cuse for him is the best that can possibly be made—
“ My brother was eighty-two years of age when he took this fatal step.”

The other observation that I shall make upon this rash measure is, the great danger, and mischievous consequences of departing either from the doctrine, or discipline of the primitive church in the purest and best ages. Trace any heresy, or any schism you please, and it will be found to be a deviation from the church in one or the other of these respects. Christianity can admit of no improvements. It was complete the moment the canon of scripture was closed ; and those who lived in, or near the Apostolic age, had many advantages for understanding what were the doctrines, the constitution, and the discipline of the Christian church, which we have not. The Holy Scriptures, expounded and elucidated by primitive and universal belief and practice, will effectually secure us from the delusions, the heresies and schisms of later ages ; and if *John Wesley* had governed himself by this rule, instead of giving himself up to Lord *King*'s dictates, we never should have heard of the *spurious* Episcopacy of the *Methodists*.

I shall now, Sir, go back to the first part of your sixth *letter*, the consideration of which I postponed, till I had taken a view of what you have said concerning the English Reformers.

The first thing deserving of notice, is your ad-
ducing the *Waldenses*, as witnesses to Presbyterian

parity. You say that they maintained that “there ought to be no diversity of rank among Ministers of the gospel—that Bishops and Presbyters, according to the word of God, and primitive practice, were the same order; and that their ecclesiastical organization was Presbyterian in its form.”

Now, Sir, I maintain, on the contrary, that the *Waldenses* were Episcopal, both in principle and practice. My first authority is *Mosheim*. He says, “The government of the church was committed, by the *Waldenses*, to Bishops, Presbyters, and Deacons; for they acknowledged that those three ecclesiastical orders were instituted by Christ himself.”* This is a very explicit, and very strong testimony against you.

The next testimony is, perhaps, stronger than *Mosheim's*. It is that of Dr. *Allix*, who minutely examined the history of this body of Christians, and pronounced them to have been Episcopal. I have not *Allix's Remarks upon the ancient Churches of Piedmont*; I must, therefore, be indebted to Dr. *Chandler* for what follows. The Doctor observes, that “*Allix* has abundantly proved, that the *Waldenses* always preserved, under all their persecutions and dispersions, the same form of church government, from the time of their separation from the church of *Rome*, in the eleventh century; and that they distinguished their clergy into three orders—

* Eccles. Hist. vol. iii. p. 126.

Bishops, Priests, and Deacons. He proves this even from the testimonies of those enemies, who endeavoured to fix upon them the reproach of allowing the laity to preach and administer the sacraments. And he proves it more fully from their own writers.*

My third testimony against you, I also take from Dr. Chandler. He quotes the author of "*The Invalidity of the dissenting Ministry*," who says, that "in 1717, a contribution was made throughout England for the *Waldenses*, and that, on that occasion, it clearly appeared that their church was Episcopal, like the church of England, for which they always pray in their Liturgy."

But what settles this matter in the most satisfactory manner, is what follows. The *Bohemian* church, in its preface to the book called, *Ratio Disciplinæ, Ordinisque Ecclesiastici in Unitate Fratrum Bohemorum*, says: "And whereas the said *Waldenses* did affirm, that they had lawful Bishops, and a lawful *uninterrupted succession from the Apostles* unto this day; they solemnly created three of our Ministers Bishops, and conferred upon them power to ordain Ministers."† And, in conformity with this, *Comenius*, the historian of the *Bohemians*, says: "The Protestants of *Bohemia*, who were apprehensive that ordinations, in which Presbyters, and not a Bishop, should create another Presbyter,

* Appeal defended, p. 91, 92. † Ibid. p. 69.

would not be lawful ; and were in doubt how they should be able to maintain such an ordination, either to others when they opposed, or to their own people when they questioned it,—sent deputies to the remains of the ancient *Waldenses*, upon the confines of *Moravia* and *Austria*, by whose Bishops these deputies were consecrated to the Episcopal office, which they have ever since transmitted to their successors.”*

From these accounts it appears beyond contradiction, that the *Waldenses* had *Diocesan*, and not *Presbyterian* Bishops, as you assert—that they consecrated three Presbyters to the Episcopal office, who were sent by the *Bohemians* for that purpose—and that they were persuaded that they had an *uninterrupted succession* of Bishops from the Apostles.

Of what consequence is it now, Sir, to inform us, that *Eneas Sylvius*, (afterwards Pope *Pius* the second) and the Monk, *Walsingham*, and one or two more of the Popish enemies of the *Waldenses*, charged them with maintaining, that Bishop and Presbyter were only different names for the same officer. They charged them also, with allowing laymen to preach and administer the sacraments. They were loaded with every kind of reproach, and destroyed with every species of cruelty. What such men said of them has no weight, when set in opposition to the respectable authorities which I have quoted.

* Com. in Frat. Bohem. as quoted by Bishop Ellys.

Your next witness in favour of Presbyterian parity, is *John Wickliffe*, Professor of Divinity in the University of *Oxford*.

It is not, Sir, an easy matter, whatever you may think, to determine what *Wickliffe's* principles were. Thus far I believe we may go with safety: He opposed the Pope's supremacy, transubstantiation, the worship of images, the invocation of saints, and some minor points. But scriptural and rational as he was with regard to these subjects, yet he maintained some very shocking doctrines. *Collier* has given us a view of them, as he took them from *Waldensis* and *Harpsfield*. These men, to be sure, were *Wickliffe's* enemies, and, therefore, we ought not to place implicit confidence in them. But if we receive their testimonies with respect to him in some particulars, we must in all, unless we can find impartial historians, who contradict these men upon the offensive tenets with which they charge *Wickliffe*. I will exhibit a few of those tenets as I find them in *Collier*.*

1st. *Wickliffe* maintains a stoical fate, and makes all things proceed from absolute necessity. God, says he, forcibly determines all creatures to their respective actions. Every one that will be damned, is a devil like *Judas*. *Judas* was chosen by our Saviour's humanity. This, says *Harpsfield*, makes men friends by predestination, and is a more hor-

* *Eccles. Hist.* vol. i. p. 584, 585, 586.

rible doctrine than that of the *Manichæans*, who made man the author of his own miscarriage, and did not fetch the principal of evil from God Almighty.

2d. *Wickliffe* is charged with denying infant baptism, and with giving a most absurd interpretation of our Saviour's declaration, that, *except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God*. He affirms, that by these words we are to understand only the water which flowed from our Saviour's side, in conjunction with the baptism of the spirit.

3d. He disallows *imposition of hands in ordination*, and all other ceremonies of an outward calling. He is likewise said to have given women the privilege of the priesthood and pulpit, and to allow Priests to ordain to their own order.

4th. *Wickliffe* is charged with several heterodoxies relating to the attributes and operations of the Almighty. As that, God always acts to the extent of his power, and can do nothing more nor otherwise, than what he does: That he could not alter the state of the creation, the order of things, or make the world greater or less than it is: That the *First Cause* is limited in the creation of human souls, and cannot exceed such a fixed and determined number, nor annihilate any thing.

5th. Several errors relating to our Saviour are ascribed to him; as that our Saviour had three natures in a separate sense; whereas, the scriptures

inform us that he consists only of two, the human and divine.

Lastly : He is charged with denying that a Bishop is superior to a Priest.

These, Sir, are but a few of *Wickliffe's* heterodoxies, as they are given us by *Collier*.* Now, you may either receive all, or reject all. Take *Wickliffe*, with some important truths, and many gross errors, and what does it all amount to? Precisely to this : that it was wasting time and paper to have noticed him. But as you have brought him to view, it was expedient for me to show, that *Wickliffe's* opinion, with respect to Episcopacy, is of no more consequence than *George Fox's*, with respect to a ministry in any degree, or under any form.

You go on, Sir, in the same irrelevant and useless manner. You inform us, that the renowned martyrs, *John Huss*, and *Jerome of Prague*, who laid down their lives for the truth, a little after the time of *Wickliffe*, embraced the greater part, if not all the opinions of the English Reformer, and especially his doctrine concerning the parity of Christian Ministers. You then quote *Eneas Sylvius* to prove this, but do not let us know in what part of his works we are to look for the quotation ; and you say, that this account is confirmed by *Thuanus*, without any reference to page or volume.

Were I to pass over the whole of this, it would be

* See also *Mesheim*, vol. iii. p. 333.

treating the matter as it deserves. When a writer gives us no particular reference, his assertion is not entitled to any notice. But waving this, I observe—

First, That *Collier*, in the view he gives us of *John Huss*' and *Jérôme*'s sentiments, does not say a word of their notions of ecclesiastical government. This, indeed, taken alone, does not amount to much. But taken in connection with what follows, it has some weight.

In the second place; *Mosheim* does not say that *John Huss* maintained the principle of ministerial parity. And *Mosheim*'s translator, Dr. *Maclean*, asserts, that he adopted the opinions of *Wickliffe* only “in relation to the *papal* hierarchy, the despotism of the court of *Rome*, and the corruption of the clergy; for in other respects, it is certain that he adhered to the most superstitious doctrines of the church, as appears by two sermons he had prepared for the council of *Constance*.”*

It cannot, therefore, be deemed of any consequence, that *Eneas Sylvius* (admitting the correctness of your quotation) charges *John Huss*, and *Jerome* of *Prague*, with maintaining the principle of ministerial parity.

Although I do not think it of the least moment what *Sylvius* says upon this point, yet I wish to have access to his works, to see with my own eyes, what he asserts with respect to these men, and

* *Mosheim*'s *Eccles. Hist.* vol. iii. p. 410.

the *Waldenses*. But I have not his writings, nor do I know who has. They are, I find, in the library of *Philadelphia*; as appears from some notes in my possession, made upon your book by a sensible and candid Clergyman of that city. “As Dr. Miller (says he) quotes *Thuanus*, *Eneas Sylvius*, and *Walsingham*, to prove, that the Bishops of the *Waldenses* were mere Presbyters, I this day [July 27th] looked into these authors, in the Library; but in the places to which the indexes refer, could find nothing to the purpose. In *Thuanus*, there is a passage, which I find translated in Bishop *Newton*; but this cannot serve Dr. *Miller*’s turn. *Eneas Sylvius* mentions them cursorily, when he introduces his account of *John Huss*. But the intemperate manner in which he speaks of both *John Huss* and the *Waldenses*, would at least invalidate what is brought from him, *if it be there*, which I doubt. In *Walsingham* I could find nothing; and, indeed, I should lay little stress on any thing from this monkish writer.”

“When I looked on Bishop *Newton*’s, and at Dr. *Mosheim*’s representations of the *Waldenses*, and at the respectable, early testimonies, so far back as the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, which they refer to in their notes, I am surprised at Dr. *Miller*’s bringing against them the testimony of *Walsingham* and *Sylvius*, who lived in the fifteenth, and that of *Thuanus*, who lived in the sixteenth century; even supposing their testimony to be as stated; of which, to say the

least, *I have great doubts.*" Thus writes a man, who would not wilfully misrepresent any thing.

You next quote a passage from *Tyndal*, who was a canon of *Oxford*, in the reign of *Henry* the eighth. But I can see nothing in the quotation to which I cannot very readily subscribe. "All that were called Elders (or Priests, if they so will) were called Bishops also, though they have now divided the names." This is very correct. Presbyters were undoubtedly called Bishops at first, but at the beginning of the second century, those who succeeded to the Apostolical pre-eminence, had the title of Bishop appropriated to them.

This *Tyndal*, according to *Collier*,* was very heterodox, upon both Popish and Protestant principles. To mention but one particular: He maintained that all Christians were Priests, and denied the necessity of any distinct order. Such a man's ideas of ecclesiastical regimen, can be of no consequence, one way or the other.

Lambert's testimony is also of the same import with that of *Tyndal's*. He certainly did not mean to exclude the Apostles from their rank in the church; and then there were three orders, Apostles, Presbyters or Bishops, and Deacons. The community of names is nothing at all to the purpose, as has been proved, almost to a demonstration.

I have now, Sir, to examine what you are pleased to call the *Concessions of Episcopalians*.

* Eccles. Hist. vol. ii. p. 72.

Before you come to the point, you prudently make the following observations: "When I exhibit Episcopal divines as making concessions in favour of our doctrine, none, certainly, will understand me as meaning to assert, that they were Presbyterians in principle. So far from this, the chief value of their concessions consists in being made by decided friends of Episcopacy. Neither will you understand me to assert, that none of these writers say any thing, in other parts of their works, inconsistent with these concessions. It is enough for me to know what language they employed, *when they undertook professedly to state their opinions on the subject before us.*"*

It appears from this quotation, that you do not bring to view the writers named in your *Letter*, for the purpose of showing that they were Presbyterians in principle. A Presbyterian is one who believes that the Apostles, acting by divine direction, left the Ministers of the church in a state of perfect equality. You acquit the authors quoted from maintaining this principle. Well then, what *did* they maintain? That the Apostles, directed by the Holy Ghost, left the church under no particular form of government? That opinion is absurd; for *some form every society* must have; and the scriptures declare the church to be a *society*; and it is evident to common sense that it is. Now, if those

* *Letter* vii p. 246, 247.

authors did not believe the church to have been committed to Ministers, acting upon a footing of equality, then they must have believed that the Apostles established the ministry upon a principle of *imparity*; and this is true and proper Episcopacy.

2. If the Episcopalians whom you quote believed that *imparity* among the Ministers of the Gospel was established by the Apostles, then they must have believed that the Apostles acted either under the direction of the Holy Ghost, or that they acted from their own private judgment. If they, under the direction of the Holy Ghost, established *imparity*, then *imparity* is a divine institution. If so, then the authority of the Holy Ghost, by which *imparity* was established, is necessary to abolish it; for it is an acknowledged principle, in both human and divine governments, that no less power than that which institutes, can abrogate. Consequently, if those Episcopalians, who assert that Episcopacy was established by the Apostles, acting under the direction of the Holy Ghost, do at the same time assert, that Episcopacy may be abrogated by human power, they involve themselves in palpable inconsistency; as then they assert, that an inferior power may abrogate what has been established by a superior; that is, that man may annul what God has instituted. This not only involves an absurdity in principle, but also leaves Christ's church completely at the disposal of whim, ignorance, interest, and passion. Upon this ground there is no such thing

as a principle of unity ; no such thing as a ministry deriving its authority from Christ ; no such thing as Ambassadors of Christ, as Stewards of the household of God. Those are Ministers who make themselves such, or are made such by the people. No criterion of genuine priesthood remains, nor was ever established. The *body* of Christ is as multi-form as clay in the hands of the potter, and every thing is a church, which man pleases to call so.

But if any Episcopalian, who maintains that Episcopacy was established by the Apostles, should, at the same time, assert, that the Apostles, in establishing it, acted from their best judgment, and not by the direction of the Holy Ghost, then they have as great difficulties to encounter, as the above description of Episcopalians.

1. They contradict the whole tenor of the New Testament.

Christ instituted a ministry, and promised to be with that ministry to the end of the world. This is beyond a doubt.

2. Christ promised the Apostles, that he would send the Holy Ghost to lead them into all the truth, with which it was necessary for his church to be acquainted. And, accordingly, the Holy Ghost descended upon the Apostles. This also is beyond contradiction.

3. The Apostles ordained Presbyters and Deacons ; and the Apostle *Paul* sent *Timothy* to *Ephe-*

sus, and *Titus* to *Crete*, to ordain those ministers. And it appears, that this was sometimes, if not always, done by the special direction of the Holy Ghost. These things cannot be denied. Then it follows,

4. That the constitution of the Christian church, as to its ministry, was fixed and rendered permanent by Christ, and that, therefore, the Apostles were not left to their own judgment. But,

5. If we were even to grant that the Apostles were left to their own judgment, yet, if Episcopacy was established by them, as the present case supposes, then the power of ordination was attached to the order of Bishops, as those Episcopalians allow, and as, indeed, the order of things necessarily implies; for in every government, commissions must flow from the fountain head: then it will follow, that Presbyters, not having been invested with that power by the Apostles, cannot possibly exercise it without usurpation. So that, whether the Apostles acted under the authority of the Holy Ghost, or from their own judgment, the constitution of the church having been settled by them, in the article of ordination, no subsequent alteration by others, in this particular, can be deemed valid.

6. To this consideration of invalidity must be added all the consequences resulting from the former case. Those are, leaving the church entirely at the disposal of whim, ignorance, interest, and

passion; and, consequently, implanting in its very constitution the seeds of variety, confusion, and deformity.

From these considerations, it appears to me, that no one who asserts that Episcopacy is an Apostolic institution, but, at the same time, admits, that it is not perpetually binding, (at least where it may be had) can be considered as holding an opinion consistent with scripture, with the nature of Episcopacy, and with those principles that are necessarily involved in the very idea of government.

I have made these observations to show, that if even the authors whom you quote, should, upon examination, turn out as you would have them, yet, acknowledging Episcopacy to be an Apostolical institution, their deductions from that fact do not at all affect the point in question. Their opinion upon the consequences of the fact is worth no more than their reasoning upon which the opinion is founded. Let that be correct, or not, they acknowledge that Episcopacy is an Apostolical institution; and that is all that I am concerned about.

The first writer whom you mention in favour of your cause, is Mr. *Dodwell*. That you should name *him*, is a very extraordinary instance of imprudence. Perhaps no man ever maintained the divine institution of Episcopacy more zealously than he did. The whole tenor of his writings evince this. He does not so much as hint, that the first Bishops

were consecrated by Presbyters, as you assert. He repeatedly declares, that the first Bishops were ordained by the Apostles; that every Bishop in his diocese, was what the High Priest was in the Jewish church; and that as the High Priest was a type of Christ, so the Bishop, in the Christian church, is his representative, or vicegerent. And from this principle, he argues against Presbyterian ordination. He held, indeed, the singular opinion, that *St. James* was divinely appointed to a supremacy over the whole Christian church, which supremacy he supposed continued till the destruction of *Jerusalem*. That then it was transferred to the Bishop of *Ephesus*: but that the Apostles, before their death, established Bishops generally over the churches; and that a succession from this source had continued through all ages, to the time when he wrote; and that it would continue to the end of the world.

Mr. *Dodwell* also supposed, that as this general establishment of Episcopacy by the Apostles, acting under the influence of the Holy Ghost, did not take place till all the Epistles were written, we are not to look for a particular and explicit exposition of this Ecclesiastical regimen in the New Testament; but that, as the whole church of Christ, in every age subsequent to the Apostolic, bears testimony to the divine institution of Episcopacy, the fact is thereby as fully ascertained as the canon of scripture, the institution of the Lord's day, and the prac-

tice of baptizing infants ; and this, he maintains, is as complete proof, as can be produced for any matter of fact whatever.

How you could think of naming *Dodwell*, as in any degree, or in any point of view, favourable to your side of the question, is more than I can comprehend. He has always been considered as a strong Episcopalian, upon the ground of divine right. He does not stop here; but deduces from this principle, what appeared to him to be its genuine consequences, viz. the invalidity of Presbyterian ordination; the inefficacy, but by *extraordinary grace*, of all the administrations of Presbyters thus ordained; and the unjustifiable schism of all who set up churches upon a principle of *parity*. If such a man can be of any service to you, Sir, you are very welcome to him.

The next person whom you name, not indeed as maintaining a *parity* of ministers, but as holding the opinion, that Presbyters were not ordained till after the canon of scripture was closed, is Dr. *Hammond*. Pray, Sir, why do you quote writers who can render you no manner of service? You know very well, that Dr. *Hammond* maintained the divine right of Episcopacy. If he had a particular notion about the time when Presbyters were ordained, what is that to the general principle? It is very probable, Sir, that you and I have not precisely the same notions about the doctrines of the Trinity and the atonement; and if we were to give our sen-

timents to the public upon these points, would it not be very preposterous in a Socinian, to quote us as not agreeing precisely in our ideas? I have no doubt, Sir, that you and some of your brethren differ considerably in your views of the divine decrees, freedom of will, election, and reprobation; yet were I disputing with you upon these points, I should think it very weak, to adduce the particulars in which you differ, as proofs against the truth of those doctrines. A perfect agreement in men's conceptions upon any doctrine, is hardly to be expected. When they admit the truth of the doctrine, that is all that a reasonable man should look for. No men more firmly believed the divine right of Episcopacy than *Dodwell* and *Hammond*; and no men more strenuously maintained it.

The next thing worthy of notice is, your quoting four authorities among the Papists, in proof that Bishops and Priests were the same in the primitive church.

Your first authority is the canons of *Elfric*, in the year 990. In those canons, you say, "Bishops and Presbyters are declared to be *of the same order*."

Pray, Sir, why did you not give us the words of the canon? I ask you seriously, do you think yourself entitled to an answer, when you do not give us the words of an author? If this had happened but in a few instances, a patient reader might bear with it; but when it occurs so very often, it is almost intolerable.

The canon which you must have had in view, is the seventeenth. "It describes," says *Collier*, "the character of a Mass, or Parish-Priest, and lays it down for a rule, that there is no difference between a Priest and a Bishop, *excepting that the Bishop has the privilege of ordination, of visiting the diocese, and managing the grand affairs of religion; and though both act within the same order, yet the nobler part of it belongs to the Bishop.*"*

Can it be possible, Sir, that you see any thing in this canon favourable to your cause? Is it of any consequence, whether we say Bishops and Presbyters are of a different *order*, or of a different *degree*? I prefer the *former*; but I do not find fault with any Episcopalian who uses the *latter*, if he acknowledges, as is done in the canon, that ordination, and a supremacy of jurisdiction, are the prerogatives of the Bishop. These powers, in the opinion of the generality of Episcopalians, create a different order; and to me it appears the more correct way of speaking. Bishop *Burnet* has already been quoted as observing, that the word *degree* came into vogue in the Romish church, after the doctrine of transubstantiation was broached; but, at the same time, it was maintained by all those who thus spoke, that the Bishop has powers, by divine institution, which the Priest has not. And this being acknowledged, it is of no consequence whe-

* *Eccles. Hist.* vol. i. p. 207.

ther we use the word *order*, or *degree*. This will serve as an answer to two or three other quotations of the same kind.

Your second authority, before the Reformation, is *Anselme*, Archbishop of *Canterbury*, who died about the year 1109. You say, that he explicitly tells us, that, "by the Apostolic institution, all Presbyters are Bishops." You then refer to his *commentary* on the Epistles to *Titus* and the *Philippians*.

Upon reading this quotation, it struck me that there must be an error somewhere or other. I could not think that *Anselme*, who, according to *Du Pin*, was a very strong Catholic, would use the language of your quotation. To satisfy myself, I first consulted *Collier*, who gives a list of *Anselme's* works, but he does not mention the *commentary* you have quoted. I next consulted *Du Pin*, who is still more minute in his list of the Archbishop's writings; but I found no such *commentary* in the list. I then had recourse to *Cave's Historia Literaria*, in which I find the *commentary* marked as a *spurious work*.* This, Sir, is an unfortunate elucidation for the extract you have given us.

Your next quotation is from the *Canon Law*. *Fustelle's* Collection of *Canons* is not within my reach. But even in the quotation which you have given us, I do not see any thing that is much amiss.

* Vol. ii. p. 162. Sæculum Hildebrandinum.

It seems to be nothing more nor less than *Jerome's* opinion,—that to prevent schism, Bishops were set over the Presbyters by general consent. This may be true or not, according to the sense in which it is taken. I suspect, Sir, that all is not quite right with respect to this quotation; but I cannot, at present, throw the same light upon it that I have upon the one immediately preceding.

Your last Catholic testimony is from the *Consultations of Cassander*. This testimony does not differ materially from the last; and as I have not access to *Cassander's* writings, I must content myself with the same answer that I have given to your extract from the Canon Law.

I have now, Sir, shown that the canons of *Elfric* are pointedly, and decidedly in our favour; and that the testimony which you ascribe to *Anselme*, is not taken from his genuine writings. And as to the two last quotations, although I cannot at present throw that light upon them that I wish; yet, I have not a doubt, that if I had the books to which you refer, I should be able to show, that you have failed as much in these, as in the others.

I shall close this letter with one observation.—It is an easy matter, by means of scraps, and sentences expressed in vague terms, to make an author speak almost any thing that we wish. In this way, I could make you appear a very good Episcopalian, and a person who had not access to your book would be at a loss to prove, that the quotations were partial and

imperfect. I have, in the course of this discussion, shown this kind of management to be so common in your *Letters*, that I suspect, even your friends will shrug up their shoulders, and make some very unfavourable exclamations. They, no doubt, will acquit you, as I certainly do, of all designed misrepresentation; but still they will, if I mistake not, be pretty unanimously of opinion, that you ought to have been more particular in your investigation, and have trusted less to others.

LETTER XVII.

REV. SIR,

AFTER giving your readers four quotations from authors before the Reformation, in favour, as you suppose, of Presbytery, you proceed to observe, "that all the first Reformers of the church of *England* freely acknowledged Bishops and Presbyters to have been the same in the Apostolic age; and only defended diocesan Episcopacy as a wise human appointment."

This I have proved to be most grossly erroneous. I have proved it from the preface to the ordinal, and from the ordination offices. I have proved that *Cranmer* placed Episcopacy upon the ground of Apostolic institution, and that all the Reformers were of the same mind. So much evidence has been produced upon this point, that I cannot conceive it possible for any human mind to resist its force.

I have also proved that you committed an error, when you asserted that *Bancroft* was the first who placed Episcopacy upon the ground of *divine right*. *Whitgift* had done so seventeen years before *Bancroft*.* The former published his answer to the

* Collier, vol. ii. p. 537.

Admonition to the Parliament, in the year 1571; the latter, by your own account, preached his famous sermon in the year 1588.

You next, Sir, give us a long quotation from Dr. *Raignolds*, from which it appears, that he did not conceive Episcopacy was founded upon divine right. To quote *Raignolds* in favour of the *human* institution of Episcopacy, is much like quoting a Presbyterian in favour of it. You must certainly know, that this learned professor was a leading man among the Puritans, and that he was the prolocutor of their commissioners, at the famous *Hampton* court conference. What a number of cavils he advanced on that occasion, may be seen in *Collier's* ecclesiastical history. To quote such a man can hardly be considered as candid. It is true, he did not separate from the church; and, therefore, I suppose, you rank him among Episcopalians. But a man cannot, with any propriety, be viewed in that light, although he may be officiating in an Episcopal church, when he renounces the very principle which discriminates Episcopacy from Presbytery. It is not a form of prayer that makes the distinction; for there are several Presbyterian churches that use forms. It is not any doctrines peculiar to either that discriminate; the doctrines, except the article of election, with its counterpart reprobation, are the same, or nearly so. It is not that the one uses rites and ceremonies, and that the other does not use them; for rites and ceremonies, in a greater or less

degree, belong to all churches that have any pretensions to decency. No; these are not the points of difference between Episcopalians and Presbyterians. The grand distinction between them is, as I have already observed, that one holds Episcopacy to have been instituted by the Apostles, guided by the Holy Ghost; the other, that a parity of ministers rests upon the same foundation. *Raignolds*, therefore, had no just claim to the character of an Episcopalian, and, consequently, his testimony is that of an enemy, and not of a friend.

Your next quotation is from Archbishop *Whitgift*, who, you say, "referring to the great attention which *Bancroft's* sermon had excited, observed that it *had done good*; but added, that with respect to the offensive doctrine which it contained, he *rather wished, than believed it to be true.*"

I shall give you the answer to this, which Dr. *Chandler* gave forty years ago to Dr. *Chauncy*, when he urged it. "This is incredible in itself, and seems to rest altogether on *Neal's* authority. This historian, in his account of *Bancroft's* sermon, refers to no other evidence than *Strype's* life of *Whitgift*; and in that book the anecdote is not to be met with. But near this time, viz. in 1589, the Archbishop, in answer to the calumnies of *Martin Mar, prelate*, says, 'that he was persuaded, that there ought to be by the word of God, a superiority among the ministers of the church; and that

it was sufficiently proved in his book against Cartwright. And that he was at all times ready to justify it by the holy scriptures, and by the testimony of all antiquity.* This clearly shows, that the Archbishop did not wish, but believed Bancroft's doctrine to be true.†

This testimony, with that quoted in the last letter, evinces, beyond contradiction, that *Whitgift* maintained Episcopacy on the ground of divine right. When, therefore, he says, (as you quote him) "It is well known that the manner and form of government used in the Apostle's time, and expressed in the scriptures, neither *is* now, nor *can*, nor *ought* to be observed, *either touching the persons or functions*;" he must certainly mean *persons and functions*, which are not essential to Episcopal regimen, otherwise he flatly contradicts himself. That a man should write a book to prove Episcopacy to be founded on the word of God, and after, in his own opinion, he has fully gained his point; that he should then very gravely tell his readers, notwithstanding Episcopacy is founded on divine authority, yet men may abolish it whenever they think proper, and substitute in its place whatever whim may suggest; that he should do this, carries improbability upon the very face of it. But conclusive as this presumption would be with every candid man, yet I am not obliged to depend alto-

* Life of Whitgift, p. 304. † Appeal defended, p. 37.

gether upon it. I have *Whitgift's* own words, from which it will appear that I have represented him with perfect correctness.

It is well known that the Puritans maintained, that nothing is to be admitted into the worship or discipline of the church, that is not prescribed in the word of God. This *Whitgift* denies; and strenuously contends, that things of a mutable nature, grounded altogether upon expediency, *are* and *must* be admitted into the church of Christ. Thus, in his defence of the *Answer to the Admonition* written by *Cartwright*, he has the following words—"Visible and external government, is that which is executed by man, and consisteth of external discipline, and visible ceremonies practised in that church that containeth in it both good and evil. For so much as you make mention of excommunication, I take it that you mean the external government of the church, and that kind of government. And yet I must ask you,—whether you mean that this government [excommunication and other censures] is necessary at all times, or then when the church is collected together, and in such place where it may have government. For you know that the church is sometimes by persecution so dispersed, that it appeareth not, as we read *Apocalypse* 6, so that it cannot have any external government, or exercise of any discipline. But to be short, I confess that in a church collected together in one place, and at liberty, government [discipline,

excommunication and other censures] is necessary in the second kind of necessity, [that is, without which a thing cannot so well and conveniently be]; but that any one kind of government [discipline, &c.] is so necessary, that without it the church cannot be saved, or that it may not be altered into some other kind thought to be more expedient, I utterly deny.”*

Again: *Whitgift*, speaking of *Cartwright*'s ridiculous assertion, that “the government of the commonwealth must be framed according to the government of the church, even as the hangings to the house,” very justly observes—“this is a dangerous error, and springeth of this, that he doth not distinguish betwixt the essential points of the government of the church, and the accidental points of the same; for the essential points of ecclesiastical government, may well agree with any lawful state of commonwealth, and civil kind of government; as the gospel may be truly preached in them all, the sacraments rightly ministered, discipline duly executed, and such like. But the accidental points of government (as the manner of electing ministers, the kind of discipline, accidental ceremonies, and other such like rites and circumstances) may be varied according to time, place, and circumstances.”† There is a great deal more to the same purpose in other parts of his book.

* Defence of the Answer to the Admonition, p. 80, 87.

† Table of dangerous doctrines.

It is evident from these quotations, that when *Whitgift* pleads for the mutability of government, he means of discipline, of church censures, of rites and ceremonies, and not of Episcopacy. Yet no doubt he maintained, even with respect to Episcopacy, what every Episcopal writer that I have ever met with maintains, that this government is not absolutely necessary to the very salvation of the church, but that it is so necessary, that the church cannot be in a sound and perfect state without it.

I think, Sir, that I have now given sufficient proof, that *Whitgift* maintained the divine right of Episcopacy, in this sense—that it was instituted by the Apostles acting under the direction of the Holy Ghost, and therefore not to be laid aside upon a pretence, that it would be more convenient to adopt some other regimen.

The next writer whom I conceive you have misrepresented, is Bishop *Bilson*. You quote a passage from his work against *Seminaries*, in which, if the passage be correctly quoted, he says, “that Bishops came in *after* the Apostles’ time.”

I have not the work to which you refer; but I have his book entitled, “The perpetual Government of Christ’s Church.” In the preface to that work, he has the following words: “Who succeeded the Apostles, whether all Presbyters equally, or certain chief and chosen men, one in every church and city, trusted with the government both of the people and Presbyters, I have largely debated, and

made it plain, as well by the scriptures as by other ancient writers past all exception, that from the Apostles to the first *Nicene* council, and so all along to this our age, there have always been selected some of greater gifts than the residue, to succeed in the Apostles' places; to whom it belonged, both to moderate the Presbyters of each church, and to take the special charge of imposition of hands; and this their singularity in succeeding, and superiority in ordaining, have been observed from the Apostles' times, as the peculiar and substantial marks of Episcopal power and calling."

"I know," continues he, "some late writers vehemently spurn at this, and hardly endure any difference betwixt Bishops and Presbyters, unless it be by custom and consent of men, but in no case by any order or institution of the Apostles; whose opinions, together with the authorities on which they build, I have, according to my skill, examined, and find them no way able to rebate the full and sound evidence that is for the contrary. For what more pregnant probation can be required, than that the same power and precepts which *Paul* gave to *Timothy*, when he had the charge of *Ephesus*, remained in all the churches throughout the world, to certain special and tried persons authorised by the Apostles themselves, and from them derived to their after-comers by a general and perpetual succession in every church and city, without conference to enlarge it, or council to decree it; the continuing whereof

for three descents, the Apostles saw with their eyes, confirmed with their hands, and *St. John*, amongst others witnessed, with his pen, as an order of ruling the church, *approved by the express voice of the Son of God*. When the original proceeded from the Apostles' mouth, and was observed in all the famous places and churches of Christendom where the Apostles taught, and whilst they lived; can any man doubt whether that course of governing the church were Apostolic? For my part, I confess I am neither so wise as to overreach it with policy, nor so wayward as to withstand it with obstinacy."

It is impossible to reconcile these, and numerous other passages with that which you quote. The great object of *Bilson's* work is to prove Episcopacy an Apostolical institution; and I cannot but think that whoever will read him with impartiality, will be satisfied that he has gained his point.—I therefore conclude, that the passage which you quote, is not in the original; or that it is so garbled as not to express the author's sense!

Bishop *Jewel* is another Episcopalian, whom you quote for some purpose or other; I do not very well know for what. Do you mean to infer from the quotation, that the Bishop thought Episcopacy was a human institution? If that be your meaning, you do him great injustice. Try, Sir, whether you can reconcile that opinion with the following extracts.—“The truth is, this church hath been persecuted, because she alone, of all the

churches in *Europe*, has had the blessing and singular favour of God to reform with prudence, moderation, and an exact and regular conduct, after great and wise deliberation, by the consent of our Bishops, Convocations, States, and Princes, without tumults or hasty counsels. So that the Papists themselves do even envy our *primitive doctrine, government, and discipline*, and both fear and hate us more than any other of the reformed churches. —They are the same things that have raised the spleens and animosities of the other side, with whom, whatever is older than *Zuinglius* and *Calvin*, is presently popery, and must be destroyed. Tell them that *Episcopacy was settled in all churches in the days of the very Apostles, and by them*; and they reply, the mystery of iniquity began then to work; intimating, if not affirming, that this *Holy Order* was a part of it.* Again: “We believe that there is one church of God—that this church is the kingdom, the body and spouse of Christ; that Christ is the only Prince of this kingdom; that there are in the church divers orders of Ministers; that there are some who are Deacons, others who are Presbyters, and others who are Bishops.”† If any words can be more explicit than these, I know not what they are.

You refer your readers for the quotation from Bishop *Jewel* to his defence of the Apology of the

* Preface to his Apology.

† Apology, p. 21.

church of *England*, page 248. I have, Sir, looked over that book from page 220 to 275, and over several other parts of the volume, but without the least success. How is this? It is possible indeed that I have missed the place; but I do not believe that I have. It is a folio that I have consulted; perhaps you took your quotation from a book of another size; or rather at second hand, from somebody else, who I am convinced has made blundering work. Be this as it may, the extracts which I have given from *Jewel's Apology*, completely settle the point.

Without attending to the order of the writers whom you quote, I shall next notice what you say concerning Bishop *Hall*. You observe that he “exerted himself in favour of the divine right of Episcopacy, with as much zeal and ability as any man of his day.”

Now, Sir, this is all that I am contending for. I have been obliged several times to tell you, that I am not endeavouring to unchurch other denominations. That is not the question in this discussion. Here a difference takes place among Episcopalians; and we may reasonably expect that it would; for the scripture has said nothing about the consequences of the opinion I am maintaining. What the essence of a church is, neither Presbyterians, nor Episcopalians, have as yet determined. Upon the question, what defect unchurches, unanimity is not to be looked for. Some Presbyterians say,

the want of a ministry unchurches; others say, it does not. Some of them say, that lay baptism is invalid; others say, no. Some unchurch Independents and Quakers, and some other denominations. Other Presbyterians do not. When you shall have the good fortune to agree among yourselves, what is the precise point at which a church loses that character, perhaps your discoveries will lead Episcopalians to unanimity; till then, I fear, we shall not be agreed, whether the divine right of Episcopacy necessarily involves the consequence, that denominations which have not Bishops, when it proceeds from necessity, want a valid ministry; and whether, again, the want of such a ministry completely unchurches.

That Bishop *Hall* maintained Episcopacy upon the ground of divine right, you acknowledge; and yet that he did not think Episcopacy absolutely essential to the *being* of a church, is very certain. He considered that want, as the Synod of *Dort* itself did, a circumstance much to be lamented. Both he and they viewed it as unavoidable; and, therefore, a misfortune, and not a crime.

It is, Sir, rather an amusing circumstance, that what you deem a concession, those staunch Presbyterian divines, to whom the epithet of *Smectymnuan* has been given, should deem no concession at all. Those divines drew up a reply to the *humble remonstrance*, supposed to have been written by Bishop *Hall*. The good Bishop, either from a con-

viction of the correctness of the opinion, or from an unwillingness to give offence, softened his doctrine in the following manner. "By divine right, is not to be understood an express law of God requiring Episcopacy, as of absolute necessity, to the *being* of a church, but an institution of the Apostles, inspired by the Holy Ghost, warranting it where it is, and requiring it where it may be had." This distinction was considered, by the *Smectymnuan* divines, as no distinction at all. They say, "If not requiring it to the *being* of a church, how then? *Requiring it only where it may be had!* What a strange limitation is this? Where is it that Episcopacy *may* not be had, *must* not be had, if it be an ordinance of Christ? Where is it that the church of Christ may not have word, sacraments, pastors, and Bishops too, if they be his ordinance? What is the meaning of this, *where it may be had?* Does he mean where it may be had with the favour of the Prince? Then the primitive church had never had any. Or where it may be had with the willing subjection of the people? Then Episcopacy shall be an ordinance, if the people will have it so. *Where it may be had!* What? With quiet and conveniency? Then you make that which you call an ordinance of God subject to man's convenience. Or what? With possibility? Requiring that where Episcopacy may be had possibly, it should? What is this less than a command?"*

* Brett on Episcopacy, p. 144, 145.

Thus you see, Sir, that those divines did not consider the Bishop's distinction as worth their acceptance. This, however, was the usual distinction at that time, in order to save the Reformed churches, and I believe it has been generally made ever since.

What I have said with respect to *Hall*, will answer very well for *Davenant*. He also maintained the divine institution of Episcopacy; but at the same time did not think it essential to the *very being* of a church.

The next person who deserves attention is, Archbishop *Usher*.

It is well known that this celebrated writer, when speaking of the difference between Bishops and Presbyters, generally used the language of the schoolmen. He considered the difference between them to consist in a superiority of *degree*, as between the High Priest and the Priests, and not in a superiority of *order*. This is evident from the quotation which you have given us. It further appears from that quotation, that the Archbishop considered ordination by Presbyters *schismatical*, except in *cases of necessity*—that he considered churches without Bishops, *very much defective*; and that the churches in *France* are in this respect *more excusable*, because they live under a *Popish power*; and, therefore, are less able to remedy the defect. It is then sufficiently evident, that the difference between *Usher* and other Epis-

episcopalians was principally *verbal*. He ascribed a real pre-eminence to the Bishop, which was communicated by a new ordination; but he considered that pre-eminence as raising a Bishop to a higher *degree* in the priesthood, but not as constituting a distinct *order*. This is, in truth, a matter of no consequence.

The opinion of the Archbishop, with respect to this subject, is given us by Dr. *Bernard*, who was many years his chaplain. The following are the Doctor's words. "For that superiority *only in degree* which he (the Primate) saith a Bishop hath above a Presbyter, it is not to be understood as an arbitrary matter, at the pleasure of men, but that he held it to be of *Apostolical institution*, and no more a diminution of the pre-eminency and authority of Episcopacy, than the denomination of lights given in common by *Moses* to all of them in the firmament, detracts from the sun and moon, whom he calls the *greater*, and were assigned of God to have the rule of the rest; though the difference between them be only *gradual*, yet there is a *derivative subordination*, as the pre-eminency of the first born was but gradual, they were all brethren, but to him was given of God, the excellency, or supremacy of *dignity and power*, to him they must bow, or be subject, and he must have the rule over them. And that this *gradus* is both derived from the pattern prescribed by God in the *Old Testament*, and from the imitation thereof brought in by the

Apostles, and confirmed by Christ in the time of the *New*, the Primate hath so fully confirmed in that learned tractate of his, *of the Original of Bishops, which he hath deduced from the Apostolical times*, that I know not what can be added.*

It is now evident that *Usher* believed Episcopacy to be an Apostolical institution; and this he abundantly proves in the above named tract. Yet the Archbishop did not think those who were without Bishops from necessity, thereby unchurched; but declares his readiness to communicate with them, were he among them; but those who *can* have Bishops and *will* not, (as was the case with the Dissenters in *England* and *Ireland*) he considered as schismatics, with whom he could not possibly communicate. This, I believe, is a correct view of the Archbishop's sentiments; and it evidently does not come up to your wish, which is, to make that great Prelate speak in favour of the *human* institution of Episcopacy.

Stillingfleet is another writer whom you quote. His famous *Irenicum* is always mentioned by our opponents with great applause. He wrote that book when he was about twenty-four years old, with a view to moderate the violent controversies which the dissenters unceasingly kept alive against the church. He perceived that so long as both parties placed their respective regimen on the ground of

* The judgment of the late Archbishop, &c. p. 127.

divine right, there was a great gulph between them, which could not be passed by either. He, therefore, from a too sanguine hope of reconciling them, adopted a neutral principle, viz. that the scriptures prescribe no form of ecclesiastical government; but have left it to the prudence of every church to regulate itself by existing circumstances. This is a specious principle, which would most certainly captivate numbers. But had that young divine been acquainted with human nature, he would not have entertained much hope of success from his wide and comprehensive scheme. It turned out as all such schemes do—it displeased both parties; and afterwards, when his judgment was matured, it displeased himself too. For he says in his *preface to the Unreasonableness of Separation*, “Will you not allow one single person who happened to write about these matters when he was *very young*, in twenty years time of the most busy and thoughtful part of his life, to *see reason to alter his judgment?*” In a sermon preached on the occasion of an ordination at *St. Paul’s*, many years after he wrote his *Irenicum*, when his judgment was perfectly matured, and his reading had become more extensive, and better digested; on that occasion, when he would be particularly attentive to what he said, and would not suffer the warmth of imagination to hurry him into bold and positive assertions, he thus seriously speaks: “I cannot find any argument of force in the *New Testament* to

prove that *ever* the Christian churches were under the sole government of Presbyters." Again: "This succession was not in mere *presidency of order*; but the Bishops succeeded the Apostles in the *government* over those churches." Further: "There is as great reason to believe the Apostolical *succession* to be of divine institution, as the *canon of scripture*, or the observation of the *Lord's day*." And in his *Unreasonableness of Separation*, he asserts, that "the case of *Timothy* is an uncontrollable instance of diocesan Episcopacy."

But it seems all this is but "a kind of vague and feeble recantation." If this be "*a vague and feeble*," I beg you will let us know what a *precise and strong* recantation is. When a man at one time says, that Episcopacy is *not* a divine institution, and, at another, says it *is*; he must have remarkably nice discernment, who perceives this to be nothing more than "a vague and feeble recantation."

This change of opinion in *Stillingfleet*, after all, is, I acknowledge, of no material consequence; but then I must, at the same time, think, that those who rely so much upon his opinion at the age of twenty-four, and treat with so much indifference his opinion at the age of forty-five, act very preposterously, if they consider merely the opinion of a learned man, and not the weight of the reasons upon which the opinion is founded. For the opinions of learned men are often as worthless as those of the unlearned.

Well then, the opinion of *Stillingfleet*, whether *for* or *against* Episcopacy, is of no consequence; but it seems the reasonings and authorities “upon which he grounds his opinions have undergone no change.” This is undoubtedly correct: They have precisely the same force *now* that they *ever* had. But is not that the case also with respect to his latter opinions? You will undoubtedly say—yes. We are come then to this point, *Stillingfleet*, in his *Irenicum*, is neither an Episcopalian, nor a Presbyterian; he has taken neutral ground; and the *reasonings* and *authorities* by which he maintains his ground, bear equally upon both parties. This being the true state of the case, why, Sir, do you name him? Does he support Presbytery upon the ground of divine right? He certainly does not. He labours to prove that it has no title to that sanction. He does the same with respect to Episcopacy. If then his “reasonings and authorities” have never been answered either by himself or others, they disprove the principle upon which both parties rest their regimen; and, consequently, the constitution of the Christian church is a matter subjected to men’s disposal. Are you prepared, Sir, to adopt this principle?

Were I to leave the matter here, *Stillingfleet’s Irenicum* would do *us* no more harm than it does *you*; nor *you* any more good than it does *us*. But *we* have something to say which *you* have not. The learned author certainly changed his opinion;

and still more, he wrote in favour of Apostolical, Diocesan Episcopacy. Now, as that is the point in dispute, if he has proved it, he has answered his *Irenicum*, although he has not made a reply to every thing asserted in that book. When the foundation is removed, the building must necessarily fall to the ground. His "reasonings and authorities" appeared to himself, and I believe they do to all Episcopalians, to go to the very point of establishing Episcopacy upon the ground of Apostolical institution; and, if so, the *Irenicum* is substantially refuted.

But this is not all. Not only *Stillingfleet* himself, but others have refuted all the leading principles of that book. I do not, indeed, know of any author who has professedly and formally answered the whole of it; but several have taken particular reasons and authorities, and have shown the one fallacious, and the other ill founded; and *Stillingfleet* himself must have thought so, otherwise he would not have changed his opinion. You indeed intimate, that he was influenced in this change by the hope of preferment, and the fear of giving offence, if he adhered to the principles of the *Irenicum*. But this is too gross an imputation, and utterly unworthy of a candid and liberal mind.

Further still. If *Stillingfleet's* "reasonings and authorities" have not been answered, it certainly must be because they *cannot* be answered; for assuredly it could not have proceeded from a want of

learning, talents, and zeal. I must then suppose that you have adopted those unanswerable "reasonings and authorities," otherwise you are not true to your cause. But seriously, Sir, it does not appear to me, nor to any Episcopalian that I have heard give an opinion upon your book, that you have said any thing that is unanswerable. I cannot but flatter myself that every thing you have said has been pretty well sifted, and that the result is a vast deal more chaff than wheat.

You next quote Bishop *Burnet* as a friend to parity of ministers; or, at least, that imparity is a matter left to human prudence.—"I acknowledge (says he) Bishop and Presbyter to be one and the same office, and so plead for no new office-bearer in the church."

Whatever *Burnet* may have been when he was a Professor in the college of *Glasgow*, at which time he wrote his vindication of the church of *Scotland*, certain it is, that he was afterwards an Episcopalian upon the ground of Apostolic and divine right. In examining the principles of the Reformers, I have produced several quotations which expressly maintain that doctrine. I will now give another from the Bishop's exposition of the thirty-nine Articles.* "Christ appointed a succession of pastors in different ranks, to be continued in his church for the work of the gospel, and that as the

Apostles settled the churches, they appointed different orders of Bishops, Priests and Deacons." There certainly is nothing for you to say after this. That *Burnet*, however, admitted a case of necessity is undoubtedly true. This has always been the *salvo*: The church is imperfect without Bishops; but where they cannot be had, men must submit to the privation, and do as well as they can; for *necessity*, says *Burnet*, *has no law*.*

That *Tillotson*, whom you introduce to our notice, was a very moderate churchman, is pretty well understood. If he had not been a sort of *neutral* man, it is probable that he would not have been nominated to the *See* of *Canterbury* by king *William*, who, you know, was a rigid Presbyterian. *Tillotson* was, I believe, as low with respect to the *regimen*, as the *doctrines* of the church. He was strongly suspected of Arianism and Universalism; and men of such principles care very little about church order, any farther than as it contributes to decency.

That *Wake*, *Bingham*, *Prettyman*, and *Gisborne*, assert the Apostolic institution of Episcopacy, the extracts you have given us fully prove. *Bingham* and *Wake*, particularly the former, are among its ablest advocates. Yet these four divines do not

* Since I sent my manuscript to the press, I have found another testimony from *Burnet*. He says, "Whereas by divine institution, all Bishops were equal, both in order and jurisdiction," &c. *Preface to Vind. Ord. Ch. of England*.

consider it as essential to the *very being* of a church. When Christians *can* have it, they *ought* to have it; but when they cannot, necessity frees them from all blame. This appears to be the more common opinion of Episcopalians.

Lord *King*, whom you quote, wrote a book to prove that *Congregational* Episcopacy is an Apostolical institution. He was answered by *Slater*, a Presbyterian of the church of England; and so completely was he refuted, that Lord *King* himself became sensible of his error, and acknowledged *Slater's* victory. This has always been confidently asserted. However this may be, it is certain, that his Lordship never made any reply, nor has any other person done it for him, that I have ever heard of. Indeed, *Congregational* Episcopacy has so little to be said in its favour, that no learning, nor ingenuity can give it the smallest degree of plausibility. It was never thought of till some years after the Reformation; and its weakness and novelty have been so completely exposed by *Stillingfleet*, *Maurice*, *Bingham*, and *Slater*, that it is astonishing to me that it should have been revived by Dr. *Campbell*, and maintained by yourself with only one point of difference. But, as I have already observed, the controversy, every now and then, must be revived; and our opponents, not being deficient in sagacity, see very clearly, that it will not do to take notice of the several triumphant answers that have been given, at different times, to their hypothesis.

You have given us, Sir, two or three extracts from a Bishop *Crofts*, whose name is so obscure, that not one of our clergy in this city have ever heard of him. All I know about him, is contained in a *prefatory discourse* to an examination of *Burnet's Exposition* of the thirty-nine Articles. The author says, "There was a pamphlet in King *Charles* the second's reign, called *Naked Truth*, that made a great deal of noise for a while, because it was supposed to be written by a Bishop, with whose station and character, the scope and design of it did very ill agree; which was to undermine the church, throw down its walls, and lay all open. What was principally aimed at, and zealously contended for, was liberty of thought and opinion; scarce allowing it to be fit to tye men up to any sort of doctrine by creeds or subscriptions; much less to confine men to any particular constitution, be it that of Episcopacy, or any other whatever."

"Whatever prospect the author of that book might have at the time he published it, the opposition which the project of a *comprehension* scored out in it, met with, at that time, quashed all hopes of it during that reign."

It appears from this account, that *Crofts* was a man of very *comprehensive* principles, an enemy to all creeds and subscriptions, and disposed to let into the church, men of all principles, both as to doctrine and government. If doctrine was not regarded by such a man, certainly government

would not be.—He was answered, I find, by Bishop *Burnet*, and some others.

As to *Willet*, *Holland*, *Whitaker*, *Forbes*, and *Moreton*, as I have not access to their works, I cannot say any thing to the quotations you have given us. They may be correct or not. I will admit them to be perfectly so. And then I ask, what do you infer from them? It must be either *something*, or *nothing*. *Nothing*, you will hardly avow. What then is the *something*? Is it, that it is probable Episcopacy is a human institution, because these five men (or twenty times five, if you please) thought so? Of that inference, I know you would be ashamed. Well then, if it adds nothing to the probability of the opinion, the inference is, precisely—*nothing*. Thus, Sir, you have thrown away *your* time, and have made me throw away *mine*.

I have now shown, I think, with uncontrollable evidence, that the Reformers of the church of *England*, and all her greatest and best writers, on the subject of ecclesiastical regimen, maintain the Apostolical and Divine right of Episcopacy. Yet, at the same time I acknowledge, that they do not consider it as essential to the *very being* of a church; but after making this concession, they insist upon it as necessary to a well organized, sound, and perfectly Apostolical church; and that a departure from it where it is, is an unjustifiable schism; except when a church imposes upon its members sinful terms of communion.

But although there are many great names, who have thus mitigated the principle, that Episcopacy is of divine right; yet it must also be acknowledged, that there are many who do not admit these qualifications, but insist upon it, and give reasons of great weight for their opinion, that if Episcopacy be a divine institution, it must be essential to a Christian church, if a ministry be so. But if a ministry be not essential to a church, then they acknowledge that Episcopacy is not. This question I shall not discuss at this late period of the controversy; nor indeed do I think, that it is a question a conscientious man would wait to have decided, were he about to make a choice of the church to which he should attach himself. He would, it appears to me, reason thus. If Episcopacy be a divine institution, it is my duty to become a member of that church in which it is found, unless sinful terms of communion be required. Whether Episcopacy be essential to the being of a church, or not, certain I am that it is my duty to submit to a divine institution. By this submission, I shall be free from all doubts and difficulties; but should I act otherwise, I must rely altogether upon my own reasoning, and that of others. This may, or may not be right; but in the other case, I shall be perfectly free from all misgivings. This appears to me to be the conclusion, at which a conscientious man would arrive.

Before I conclude this letter, it may be well for

me to state, in what sense I consider Episcopacy as resting upon the ground of *divine right*.

A thing may be said to be divinely instituted, in three senses.

1. As God positively ordains it by his own express command, or by the express command of his Son Jesus Christ. In this sense, I do not take Episcopacy to be a divine institution. Nor in this sense, is the Christian sabbath, or infant baptism, or the canon of scripture, entitled to the sanction of divine institution.

2. A thing may be said to be of divine institution, when it is delivered by men divinely inspired; as are all those precepts and ordinances, delivered by the Apostles and Prophets, by divine inspiration. Every thing of that kind must be deemed of divine institution, because God, by his Holy Spirit, has commanded it.

3. Whatever is founded upon a divine commission, as the preaching of the gospel, the administration of the sacraments, and the power of the keys, is of divine institution.

In the two last senses, I take Episcopacy to be of divine institution. For, if the Holy Ghost inspired the Apostles to establish Episcopacy in the church, it is certainly of divine institution, although there may be no express and formal precept for that purpose. Or if the Apostles, by virtue of the commission which they received from Jesus Christ, established Episcopacy, it must, if not immediately,

yet mediately, be grounded upon divine institution. For if the Apostolic commission was founded upon divine authority, as it certainly was, then all commissions derived from that source, and within the limits of that commission, are also mediately founded upon divine authority; and in this sense, at the least, every one that believes Episcopacy not to be a mere human institution, must believe it to have a divine sanction.

This statement is, I believe, agreeable to the sentiments of the best writers on our side of the question. I am sure that it perfectly coincides with the opinion of Bishop *Saunderson*. After observing that Episcopacy is not founded upon a peremptory command of God in his word, he says, "There is a secondary and more extended signification of that term, [divine right] which is also of frequent use among divines. In which sense such things, as having no express command in the word, yet are found to have authority and warrant from the institution, example, and approbation, either of Christ himself, or his Apostles; and have (in regard of the importance and usefulness of the things themselves) been held by the consentient judgment of all the churches of Christ in the primitive and succeeding ages, needful to be continued: such things, I say, are usually and interpretatively said to be of divine right."

Again he says; "They, therefore, that so speak of this government as established by divine right,

are not all of them necessarily to be understood, as if they meant it in that first and strictest sense [as founded upon positive precept]. Sufficient it is for the justification of the church of *England*, in the constitution and government thereof, that it is (as it certainly is) of divine right in the latter and larger signification; that is to say, of Apostolical institution and approbation; exercised by the Apostles themselves, and by other persons in their times, appointed and enabled thereunto by them, according to the voice of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by virtue of the commission they had received from him.”

“ Which, besides that it is clear from evident texts of scripture, and from the testimony of as ancient and authentic records, as the world hath any to show for the attesting of any other part of the established doctrine of the church of *England*; so it is evidently deduced out of sundry passages in the book of *Consecration*, and hath been constantly and uniformly maintained by our best writers, and by all the sober, orderly, and orthodox sons of this church.”*

Thus, Sir, I think it is as clear that the Episcopal order is of divine institution, as that the order of Presbyters is. There is no positive precept which ordains the office of a Presbyter; but we see that order in the scriptures, and we know that it

* Saunderson's *Episcopacy not prejudicial to Regal power*, sect. ii. No. 3, 4, 6.

was the sense of the Apostles, and of the whole primitive church, that it was to be continued to the end of the world.

There is no possibility of guarding any doctrine of Christianity, or any of its institutions, from the cavils of men wedded to their own systems, and peculiar ways of thinking. There is no objection that has been made by the Presbyterians against Episcopacy, that has not been made by Independents against Presbytery; and what is not a little amusing, the Presbyterians were obliged to have recourse to the weapons of Episcopalians, in order to defend themselves. It is curious to read the controversy between those two denominations of dissenters, as we have it in the *Fus divinum*, &c. When the Independents denied the perpetuity of the ministry by an uninterrupted succession, the Presbyterian divines replied, "All that is written in the epistles concerning the ordainers and the qualifications of the ordained, is directed to *Timothy* and *Titus*." To prove the constant succession of the ministry, they argue like staunch churchmen—"That Christ was sent, and had his commission from his Father. That Christ, as he was sent of his Father, so he sent forth his Apostles. That the Apostles went about ordaining Elders in every church, and that the Apostle *Paul* ordained *Timothy* and *Titus*. [Mark this.] That these ordained others, and that as *Timothy* was entrusted with the word of Christ, so he was commanded to commit the same trust to

faithful men, that so there might be a succession of teachers." They also urgè Matt. xxviii. 20, "I am alway with you, even unto the end of the world." And 1 Tim. vi. 14, "Keep this commandment until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ;" and several other texts.

When the assembly urge against the Independents the testimony of the Fathers, the practice of antiquity, and of all former ages, for a succession of ministers, the fanatics pay them in their own coin, telling them that "corruptions, and antichristianism, and tyranny, came very early into the church; that the mystery, and the ministry of the man of sin were working in the first centuries; that in this apostacy, the church, which had been a chaste virgin, became the mother of harlots and abominations—*Bethel* turned into *Bethaven*, and the ministry wholly lost under antichrist."

To this the Westminster divines reply, that "the truths, ordinances, servants, and ministries of Christ, do not, therefore, cease to be of Christ, because some, either by mistake or by design, shall say, they are of antichrist—that it is a great cheat put upon the saints of God in this nation, in scaring people from the doctrine of Christ, by persuading them to avoid anti-Christ." And, therefore, they earnestly entreat their respective congregations "not to be affrighted at the bug-bear words anti-christian and popish." They tell the fanatics, that "no true ministry, no true church—that the Lord Jesus hath

given the ministry to the church, to continue till all come to the unity of the faith, which will not be till the day of judgment.”

I shall make but one more extract from the *Jus divinum*. When the fanatics assert that the people have a right to ordain ministers, the *Assembly* ask—“By what authority do you do these things, and who gave you this authority? Show us your warrant out of the word. Why was *Titus* sent to appoint Elders in every city? Might not the people say, what need *Paul* leave *Titus* to do that which we can do ourselves? Add that which to us seems of weight, that all that is written in the *epistles* concerning the ordainers, and the qualifications of the ordained, is all written in the *epistles* to *Timothy* and *Titus*, who were church officers. In the other *epistles* which were written to the churches, there is no mention made of these things, which doth abundantly prove to us, that the work of ordination is a work belonging to ministers, and not to the people. And they alone who have received this church power from the Apostles, can transmit it to others. [Here is the doctrine of uninterrupted succession most clearly.] Now let us change but one word, and put *Presbyter* instead of *people*, and see how those reverend gentlemen plead the Episcopal cause.—“By what authority do you Presbyters do these things, and who gave you this authority? Why was *Titus* left in *Crete*, or *Timothy* in *Ephesus*, to ordain Elders? Might not those Elders say,

what need *Paul* leave *Timothy* to do that which we can do ourselves? All that is written in the epistles concerning ordainers, is written in the epistles to *Timothy* and *Titus*, who were the church officers for this purpose. In the other epistles there is no mention made of these things, which doth abundantly prove that the work of ordination is a work belonging to *Timothy* and *Titus*, and not to the Presbyters; and they alone who have received can transmit it." Thus the *Presbyterian* calls on the *fanatic* to show his commission; the *Episcopalian*; with the very same reason, calls upon the *Presbyterian* to show *his*.—Where is the consistency of all this?

I have now, Sir, examined every thing material in your letter upon the *Concessions of Episcopalians*, and I have shown that all the authors whom you quote (four or five excepted, whose works I have not), maintained Episcopacy upon the ground of Apostolical and divine right. There is, indeed, a difference of opinion among Episcopalians with respect to the consequences of this principle, as there is among Presbyterians with respect to the consequences of the divine right of Presbytery; but this, in either case, does not affect the principle. It is, therefore, weak and sophistical to urge this difference against either Presbytery or Episcopacy.

I forgot, Sir, to make, in their proper place, a few observations upon what you ascribe to Bishop *White*. It may be well, although not in order,

just to notice what you say. You assert that he maintains, “ that the doctrine which founds Episcopacy upon *divine right*, has never been embraced by the great body of the most esteemed divines in the church of England.”*

This may be true, and yet leave Episcopacy upon as high ground as I wish to place it. By *divine right*, Bishop *White* means *positive precept*, or a direct command in so many words, that there shall be three orders in the church,—Bishops, Presbyters, and Deacons, and that they shall continue to the end of the world. There is no heterodoxy in this opinion. All the great Episcopal writers acknowledge this to be the truth. But will you venture to assert, that Bishop *White* does not place Episcopacy upon the ground of Apostolical institution? You certainly will not; because the following quotation would stare you in the face. “ There having been an Episcopal power originally lodged by Jesus Christ with his Apostles, and by them exercised generally in person, but sometimes by delegation, (as in the instances of *Timothy* and *Titus*) the same was conveyed by them to one pastor in each church, which generally comprehended all the Christians in a city, and a convenient surrounding district. Thus were created the Apostolic successors.” Again: “ It seemed good to the Apostles to appoint some of these with a super eminent com-

* Letter vi. p. 229.

mission, of which there were instances in *Timothy* and *Titus*; and the persons so appointed have handed down their commission through the different ages of the church. This is the originally constituted order.”*

Now (to use the words of Dr. *Hobart* with a little alteration) “if you will make these concessions, and hold this language, you fairly give up your cause. You maintain all that the *Episcopalian* could wish. And we shall be glad to hear on what grounds you will justify your rejection of the *originally constituted order*, and of degrees of the ministry, who had their *beginning from Christ and his blessed Apostles*.”

It is now, Sir, very evident, that *Bishop White* holds the *divine right* of *Episcopacy* in this sense; that it was instituted by the *Apostles* under the direction of the *Holy Ghost*, and, consequently, according to the will of our *Lord Jesus Christ*. He surely then is at variance with *Presbyterian parity*.

I shall in my next consider your letter upon “the rise and progress of *Episcopacy*.”

* *Hobart's Apology*, 139, 140.

LETTER XVIII.

REV. SIR,

MY labour is now happily drawing to a close. I have little more to do than to take a view of your *fanciful* statement of “the rise and progress of Episcopacy.” I do not conceive that it is *necessary* for me to do this; for if I have proved the fact, that Episcopacy is an Apostolical institution, all the efforts of your ingenuity to show that it took its rise long after the death of the Apostles, must be ascribed to the “audacity of fancy,” and be deemed utterly inconsistent with the truth of history. No, Sir, it is not because you have said any thing in your eighth *Letter*, which in any degree affects the evidence I have produced, that I am led to examine your plausible attempt to account for what *never has yet* been accounted for; but because I shall be furnished with an opportunity of presenting to my readers, what I deem complete moral demonstration, that Episcopacy is not a human, but a divine institution. This is my leading motive for continuing this discussion: my secondary motive is, to show your readers, that you have exhibited to them, a perfect tissue of conjectures, fallacies, and misrepresentations of facts.

There is a question, which, at the very outset of this inquiry, will occur to a reflecting mind.—If Episcopacy was introduced into the church *after* the Apostolic age, what can be the reason, that it cannot be determined by the advocates for *parity*, when this anti-christian usurpation took its rise. Some of them place it in the close of the first century, before the death of St. *John*, as *Baxter*, *Chamier*, and *Du Moulin*; others in the beginning of the second century, as *Doddridge* and *Salmasius*; others in the middle of that century, as *Blondel* and the *Westminster divines*; others at the close of that age, as *Campbell* and *Chauncey*; others in the third century, a long list of whom you will find in *Sage's Cyprianic Age*; and others again in the fourth century, as yourself, *Lord King*, and a few more. Here is a wide range taken by our opponents; not less than the space of two hundred years. Now, this difficulty of pointing out the time when Episcopacy took its rise, must be owing either to a want of records, or to the very trifling nature of the change. To the first it has never been ascribed; for the records are sufficiently ample. Nor can it, with the most distant appearance of reason, be ascribed to the latter; for the change was very striking and important; no less than that of depriving the Presbyters throughout the whole Christian church of their right of ordaining, and of establishing in one person a supremacy of power and jurisdiction. It is not possible to

consider such a change as unimportant, and unworthy of notice. This then is the first presumptive proof, that no such change took place.

You endeavour, Sir, to surmount the difficulty, which arises from the wide difference of opinion among Presbyterians, with respect to the date of Episcopacy, by saying that we cannot tell the time when *infant* communion began in the church. And do you seriously think, Sir, that this, were it true, would obviate the difficulty? How is it possible that you should not see, that there is no parrallel between the two cases? What human being did *infant* communion deprive of his rights? What was there in this practice to excite the passions of men? What to produce violent contention, and strenuous resistance? Was the adult injured by it? Did it exclude him from the altar? Not a single consideration can be perceived by the human mind to induce it to think, that any thing more than verbal contention would be the issue. But in the other case, the Presbyters were deprived of their most sacred rights. The right of ordaining, which was given them by Jesus Christ, and which they werè as sure belonged to them as that they held the office of Presbyters, was wrested out of their hands. A *parity* of power and jurisdiction, which they had derived from the same source, was abolished, and a supremacy established in an individual, in every city. I appeal to every man who is acquainted with human nature, whether such flagrant

injustice was not sufficient to rouse the fiercest passions of the heart? Let the trial be made at this day, by a number of the most daring spirits among the Presbyterian ministers in this country, to seat themselves in Episcopal chairs. To ask a child what would be the issue, would be to insult his understanding.

It must be obvious to every reflecting mind, that there is a great difference between opinions, which do not in the least affect the rights and privileges of others, and principles which do. The former may be broached and spread considerably, before any notice is taken of them. But the latter immediately set men upon exerting all the powers of resistance. Every effort would have been made by the Presbyters to prevent the execution of so daring a project; and considering the circumstances in which the church was, before the establishment of Christianity by the Emperor *Constantine*, it was morally impossible for the Bishops to succeed in their foolish and wicked attempt. There is, therefore, no parallel between the two cases.

I think I might safely trust this reasoning with every impartial person. The difference between a principle which is perfectly harmless, and one that, when acted upon, is flagrantly unjust, sets the two cases at such an immense distance, that I am astonished at your bringing them to a point of comparison. But the unreasonableness of this mode of removing the difficulty need not have been in-

sisted upon, for you have, by a single sentence, given up the point. Remember that the opponents of Episcopacy cannot agree, whether it took its rise in the first, second, or third century, or even till some time in the fourth. But you say, "It is certain that this corruption [infant communion] existed in the second century." Here you fix the time; for I suppose you do not mean to carry it up to the first century, and make it an Apostolical practice. Nor is it at all probable that it took its rise early in the second century, while numbers were living who had seen the Apostles administer the holy communion. We must, therefore, upon every ground of probability, place its beginning somewhere about the middle of the second century. Now, Sir, we do not tie you up in this manner. We do not ask you to give us a period of a few years, when all the Presbyterians in the world became Episcopalian; although we certainly have a right to call for the record of such a wonderful revolution. No, Sir, we will not confine you to so short a period as *fifty* years. You may take any entire century you please after the first; and if we do not prove from indubitable records, that Episcopacy existed before your given period, we are willing to give up the whole cause.

It seems then, that you can tell, within a few years, when infant communion began; but you request of us to allow you between two and three hundred years for the period, within which Episcopacy made its appearance, and then you can

very confidently assure us, that its birth happened within that short, very short space. This is very modest, and very consistent. A harmless opinion and practice, which could irritate, which could injure no one, can be traced within a few years of its birth; but a wonderful revolution, calculated to inflame the passions of thousands, and to produce in the church the most violent convulsions, the most virulent animosities, is involved in such thick darkness, that it is impossible for the greatest antiquaries among the Presbyterians to tell us in what century this new form of government was given to the church. The man who can believe this, needs not to pray that his faith may be strengthened.

You assert, Sir, very confidently, that infant communion was the practice of the church in the second century; but, as usual, you talk without book. Who is your warrant for this assertion? You name none. On the contrary, I assert, that there is no authority to be produced earlier than *St. Cyprian*, about the middle of the third century. *Bingham* names that Prelate as the first who mentions it. Neither *Tertullian*, nor *Clemens of Alexandria*, nor *Ireneus*, nor *Justin Martyr*, say any thing about it. We have, therefore, no reason to think, that it was known in the church till the third century. Here then the rule of *Vincentius Lirinensis* completely fails. *Quod semper, quod ubique, quod ab omnibus*, does not accord with infant communion; and, consequently, *it is not* of Apostolic institution;

but Episcopacy has been proved to accord perfectly with these marks, and, therefore, *it is* of Apostolic institution.

If Episcopacy were merely a point of opinion, and not a matter of fact, which was calculated to inflame the passions, and produce animosity and contention, I should not think it reasonable to call upon our opponents to point out the time, even within half a century, when it took its rise. Opinions creep in the dark for some time, and are not immediately noticed; but great revolutions, either in church or state, are always the prominent objects of history. The historian seizes upon them with avidity, dwells upon them minutely, and paints them in strong and vivid colours. But the change from Presbytery to Episcopacy was conducted with all the silence of the grave; no historian recording it, no mortal perceiving it. Yet our opponents talk with as much confidence of a change, as if they could produce history in abundance to warrant their assertion; as if they could give us the place *where*, or the year *when*, it made its appearance. But when pressed upon this point, why then, to be sure, they beg to be excused; and gravely tell us, that there are certain *opinions*, and certain *practices*, the date of which cannot be ascertained; and this they think is a set-off to the difficulty of accounting for a change, which, in the circumstances of the primitive church, was morally impossible.

But if the case of infant communion will not

meet that of Episcopacy, perhaps it may be met by the difficulty of assigning a period for the introduction of Metropolitans. Here, Sir, you will find no relief from your embarrassment. This case, if possible, is worse than the last. There is no difficulty in determining when Metropolitans were introduced into the church. "That primacy commenced," (says *Dr. Cave**) "not long after the Apostolic age, when sects and schisms broke in apace, and controversies multiplying between particular Bishops, it was found necessary to pitch upon one in every province, to whom the umpirage of cases might be referred, and by whom all common and public affairs might be directed." With this, as to time, *Bingham* agrees, adding—"Perhaps it [the office of Metropolitan] took its rise from that common respect and deference, which was usually paid by the rest of the Bishops, to the Bishop of the *civil* metropolis in every province; which advancing into a custom, was afterwards made into a canon by the council of *Nice*."†

Bingham gives sufficient evidence of the rise of Metropolitans in the second century. He observes, that "*Lyons*, in *France*, was a metropolis in the civil account; and *Ireneus*, who was Bishop of it, is said to have the superintendency of the *Galican Paræciæ*, or dioceses, as *Eusebius* words it. *Philip*, Bishop

* *Annals of Church Government*, p. 92.

† *Antiquities*, vol. i. p. 185, 186, octavo edition.

of *Gortyna*, in *Crete*, is styled by *Dionysius* of *Corinth*, Bishop of all the *Cretian* churches. *Polycrates*, Bishop of *Ephesus*, presided in council over all the Bishops of *Asia*; *Palma*, of *Amastris*, over the Bishops of *Pontus*; and *Theophilus*, of *Cæsarea*; with *Narcissus* of *Jerusalem*, over the rest of the Bishops of *Palestine*.”

“It is true (continues *Bingham*) none of these are expressly called *Metropolitans*; for that name scarcely occurs in any ancient record before the council of *Nice*; but they were at first *πρωτοι*, and *κεφαλαι*, *chief Bishops*, and *heads* of the province, as the Apostolical canon styles them. After ages gave them other names, as that of *Archbishops*, at *Alexandria*, and other places, till that name became appropriate to the *Patriarchs*.”

Thus you see, Sir, there is not the least difficulty in determining when *Primates*, or *Metropolitans*, took their rise in the Christian church; and, therefore, you cannot derive the least degree of relief from this quarter.

But, Sir, if it were even impossible to determine the century when *Metropolitans* first appeared in the church, still there would be no parallel between this difficulty, and the one relating to *Episcopacy*. There was no *usurpation* of power, (as you assert) by that order of Bishops. It was a *Presidency* perfectly natural, because expedient, nay, necessary. When, in the second century, Bishops were multiplied in consequence of the diffusion of *Christianity*,

those who resided in the same Province frequently met in council, for the purpose of regulating the affairs of their churches. A council, for the sake of order, requires a president; and the election of that officer would most commonly fall upon the Bishop of the metropolis, who, from the wealth and number of his congregations, would naturally acquire (all other circumstances being equal) a superior degree of consequence. This was, in fact, the case; for we find, in the history of the church, that the Bishops of *Rome, Antioch, Jerusalem, and Alexandria,* were the first Presidents, or Metropolitans, in the Christian church. There was no usurpation in this; it was a matter of choice; a matter of necessity, after provincial councils took their rise. We, therefore, hear no complaints about it in the second and third centuries; for what was the wish of all, could give offence to none.

Further, the Metropolitcal power, which was very small, till after the establishment of christianity, did not deprive other Bishops of any rights belonging to their office; consequently, there was nothing to excite resentment and opposition. The Bishops retained in the highest degree, and most complete security, their right of ordaining and confirming; and their supremacy of jurisdiction within their dioceses. What then was there in this measure of expediency, which can, without a prostitution of language, be called usurpation? Or what kind of parallel can there be between the rise of Metropoli-

tans, and the rise of Episcopacy, when the time of the former *can* be named, and the reasons of the appointment assigned ; and when the time of the latter *cannot* be named, and no reason, no motive which influences the human mind can be assigned ? — Surely none.

And here, I would just remark by the way, that this appointment of Metropolitans, or *Primi inter pares*, is a convincing proof of the existence of Bishops at that time ; not *congregational*, but *diocesan* Bishops ; for those standing Presidents convoked none but Bishops to meet in councils ; and Presbyters were excluded from them as *members* ; unless perhaps they happened to represent their absent Bishops.

But, Sir, although you have been extremely unfortunate in adducing these two instances to get rid of a pressing difficulty, yet perhaps your next instance will serve you better. You inform us that, “ closely connected with the introduction of Archbishops, and other grades in the Episcopal office, is the rise and progress of the *Papacy*. It is certain, that the anti-christian claims of the Bishop of *Rome* were begun before the close of the second century. The writings of *Ireneus* and *Tertullian* both furnish abundant evidence of this fact. Yet, the records of antiquity give so little information, respecting the various steps by which this *man of sin* rose to the possession of his power ; they contain so little evidence of any efficient opposition to his claims,

and represent the submission of the other Bishops as being so early and general, that the Papists attempt, from these circumstances, to prove the divine origin of their system.”

Here is, I think, abundance of error; but happily it will not take many pages to expose it.

In order to understand one another upon this point, I would ask, what do you mean by the *Papacy*? Do you mean the temporal power of the Pope, or his claim of universal supremacy over the Christian church? I presume it is the latter; because the former is not peculiar to the Pope; many Bishops holding with their ecclesiastical, princely powers. It seems then, according to your statement, that we do not know when this claim of supremacy was first advanced, and when it was first allowed. I cannot acquiesce in this. I find no difficulty at all in determining these points. *Boniface* the third, in the seventh century, was the first Bishop of *Rome* who claimed the title of *æcumenical*, or *universal Bishop*.* This title was indeed claimed but a few years before, by *John*, Bishop of *Constantinople*. This arrogance was resented by *Gregory* the *Great*, who was contemporary with *John*, in the most marked terms of reprobation. He says, that whoever arrogates to himself this title, outstrips *anti-Christ*.† Here then is positive proof,

* *Barronius*, An. Eccles. vol. viii. p. 198. *Anastasius De Vitis Pont. Rom.* vol. i. p. 117, and *Mosheim*.

† *Ego audentem fidenter dico, quod quisquis se universalem sacerdotem vocat, vel vocari desiderat, in elatione sua, anti-*

that the claim of supremacy was not known in the Christian Church till the seventh century. Thus, Sir, we have settled one point; the other is, to determine when this claim was granted, and carried into effect. And this point is as easily settled as the former. The cruel usurper, *Phocas*, who murdered his master, *Mauritius*, granted this title to *Boniface*. Soon after the Pope began to carry into effect this *supremacy*. He convened a synod of seventy-two Bishops, thirty Presbyters, and three Deacons, who decreed that no election of a Bishop should be deemed legal, unless ratified by the Pope in these words—*Sic volumus et jubemus*.*

There is not, before the seventh century, the least trace of any system of policy in the *Holy See* to establish its claim of superiority over other Bishops. There was, indeed, in the time of *Cyprian*, an undue stretch of power by *Stephen*, Bishop of *Rome*; but it was treated with the utmost contempt by the other Bishops, and particularly by *Cyprian*, who, on that occasion, declared, “there is no Bishop of Bishops” in Christ’s Church. But any thing like Papal supremacy was not known till the period which I have assigned to it.

The famous forgery of the donation of *Italy* to Pope *Sylvester*, by *Constantine the Great*, forms another remarkable epoch in the history of the Pa-

christum præcurrit, quia superbiendo se cæteris præponit. Greg. Op. l. vi. Ep. 50.

* Platina, p. 60. Vitæ Pont.

pal usurpation. This forgery, which contributed so much to the extension of the power of the "man of sin," was never suspected till the twelfth century, when a hint to that purpose was dropped in a *Sabine* monastery. But it was left for the bold and masterly pen of *Laurentius Valla* to unmask the imposture, and expose it to the world in all its deformity. To this forgery, the Popes owed much of their civil authority, and as that increased, their ecclesiastical power increased with it.

It would extend the discussion upon this point to too great a length, were I to go on marking the several epochs of the increasing power of the Popes; but this has been done by so many able writers, that whoever wishes to be well informed upon this subject, can be at no loss for sources of information. Enough has been said to disprove your assertion, that we know not the time when the Papacy came into being. Nay, Sir, we know the time when all the leading errors of the Church of *Rome* were broached. The present subject does not require me to enter upon a detail of this kind; but I stand ready to do it whenever it shall become necessary.

You inform us, Sir, that "the anti-christian claims of the Bishop of *Rome* were begun before the close of the second century;" and that "the writings of *Ireneus* and *Tertullian* furnish abundant evidence of the fact." This, Sir, is very vague. You should have informed us what you mean by "anti-christian claims." It may be true, and yet amount

to very little. I believe I could give proof enough of other Bishops doing the same thing; and what is more, I can give abundant proof, that Presbyters and Deacons, and even laymen, asserted "anti-christian claims." But that the Bishop of *Rome* claimed, in the second century, supremacy over all other Bishops, I utterly deny, and call upon you to give us the proof. On the contrary, it is a notorious fact, that the church of *Rome* was, for the first three centuries, as pure as any church then upon earth. She maintained in a high degree, *the unity of the faith, in the bond of peace.*

Neither, Sir, have you given us any quotations from the above named Fathers. Perhaps that would have entirely spoiled your assertion. We should have then known the extent of those "anti-christian claims." Your intimation of something like Papacy might then appear to be *nothing* like it; and that would have entirely defeated the policy, which just gives a glimpse of something wrong, and leaves it to the reader's imagination to make out the worst. This will do very well in some species of composition; but in *letters*, which profess to give a correct view of the Christian Church, such management is very censurable.

At the time that you committed to paper the assertion, that "the anti-christian claims of the Bishop of *Rome* were begun before the close of the second century," I wonder, Sir, that you did not perceive that you were destroying your own hypothesis. You

say, it is as difficult to trace the rise and progress of Papacy as of Episcopacy. Yet, you assure us, that the former took its rise in the second century, and your authorities for this assertion are *Ireneus* and *Tertullian*. But neither you, nor any body else, can tell us the century when Episcopacy began; and yet, it seems, that being *able* to ascertain the one, and *unable* to ascertain the other, amounts precisely to the same thing. Happy inconsistency, which affords a man such decisive proof!

Another unlucky circumstance attends you, Sir. You name authorities for the rise of Papacy; but no mortal ever yet attempted to produce one writer who says, that Episcopacy took its rise in any age short of the Apostolic. Yet, no doubt, this important *difference* makes the two cases perfectly *similar*.

Enough has now been said to show, that the rise and progress of Popery can, in every thing material, be easily traced; but the rise of Episcopacy, upon Presbyterian principles, still remains involved in impenetrable darkness. Not one ray of light has as yet been thrown upon this point, by the ablest advocates of parity. This is evident from their being so completely at variance among themselves, when they attempt to assign any period of time for the birth of Episcopacy. This could never be the case, were there any footsteps of *parity* in the primitive church.

You go on, Sir, to other examples, in the same

inconsequential manner. You say, " Scarcely less remarkable, or in itself improbable, was the change which early took place in the mode of *electing* and *installing* the Pastors of the church. You have been informed, in preceding parts of this work, that, as each Bishop, in the primitive church, was the Pastor of a single congregation ; so every Bishop was elected by *the people* of his charge, and ordained to the work of the ministry *in their presence*. It is certain, however, that at least as early as the fourth century, this power of electing their own Bishops began to be gradually taken away from the people ; and that, in the course of two or three centuries afterwards, the privilege was almost wholly withdrawn from them. But how came a right so popular, and so highly prized, to be tamely surrendered ? And why is it that the records of antiquity furnish so little information on this subject ? &c.*

Here is a great deal said, but nothing proved. You take it for granted, that the people elected their Bishops for the first three centuries. But would it not, Sir, be better to prove this by competent testimony ? What evidence is there that, in the first century, Bishops or Presbyters were elected by the people ? None at all. On the contrary, it is evident from the New Testament, that they were elected by the Apostles, and that the people had no voice in the business. There is not a single instance that

* Page 299.

can be produced in opposition to this assertion. Does *Clemens Romanus* intimate that the people elected Bishops? Quite the contrary, as you very well know. He expressly asserts, that Bishops and Deacons were designated by the Holy Spirit for their respective offices? Does *Barnabas* countenance your assertion? He has not a syllable upon the subject. Does *Hermas*? He also is silent. Does *Ignatius*? Very far from it. Does *Justin Martyr*, or *Ireneus*, or *Tertullian*, or *Clemens of Alexandria*? No testimony ever *has* been, or *can* be produced to this purpose. Here then are two centuries, from which not a tittle can be drawn to countenance your assertion. But perhaps the third century will furnish you with sufficient evidence of this fact. But what, Sir, if it should? That would not prove, that the people elected their Bishops in the first and second centuries. In the first, as we have seen, there is positive evidence *against* it; and in the second, there is no evidence *for* it. Well then, if this practice began in the third century (for we have no right to say that it began sooner) and was abolished in the fourth, as you intimate, we have a period assigned for its rise, its progress, and its abolition. Consequently, this is not a case that will serve for an offset to the difficulty of accounting for the rise of Episcopacy.

Were I, Sir, to rest the matter here, it would completely defeat your view, in asserting that Bishops were elected by the people till the fourth

century. But I will give you one passage from *St. Cyprian*, which shows what was the general practice of the *African* churches in electing a Bishop. In his sixty-eighth epistle he says, "It is the custom throughout almost all the provinces for the neighbouring Bishops to meet together, and choose a Bishop *in the presence* of the people, who know his life and conversation; which was done at the ordination of *Sabinus*, Bishop of *Emerita*, in *Spain*, who was ordained to that dignity by the suffrage of the people, and the decision or judgment of the Bishops"—*Quod factum videmus in Sabini ordinatione ut de universæ fraternitatis suffragio, et de Episcoporum judicio episcopatus ei deferretur. Cyprian* generally uses the word *suffrage* for *approbation*, *liking*; but not for *polling*, or *voting*. Of this I will give two instances out of many which might be quoted. In his tract *De Zelo et Livore*, he says, when the people saw *David* slay *Goliah*, "they broke forth into praises of *David* with suffrage of applause." There certainly was no voting on that occasion. In his treatise *De Vanitate Idolorum*, he says, that the *Jews* delivered up our Saviour to *Pontius Pilate*, "requesting his death by violent and pertinacious suffrages"—*Mortem suffragiis violentis et pertinacibus flagitantes*. This expresses the violent desire of the *Jews* to see *Jesus* put to death, but no more than desire, and approbation; for they had at that time, no power to put any man to death. If you wish to see instances of this kind.

multiplied, and the point clearly proved, that the people had nothing to do with the election of a Bishop, but barely gave their testimony to his character, please to consult *Slater's Original Draught*, and *Sage's Cyprianic Age vindicated*.

Let me also remind you, Sir, of St. *Jerome's* testimony to this point. "At *Alexandria* (says he) from *Mark* the Evangelist to *Heraclas* and *Dionysius's* Episcopate (that is, in the third century), the *Presbyters* always nominated one their Bishop, chosen from among themselves."

It appears then from the New-Testament, that the people did not claim any right to elect their Bishops, but that the Apostles always nominated them, as St. *Paul* did *Timothy* and *Titus*; and from *Clemens Romanus*, that the Apostles went through cities and regions ordaining Bishops, who were designated by the Holy Ghost. And it does not appear from any records of the second century, that the people ever exercised or claimed that right. It also appears from *Cyprian* and *Jerome*, that elections were conducted in a different manner, in the third century. About the close of this century, I believe, the people of *Rome* acquired great influence in the election of their Bishops; but they exercised it in such a tumultuous and scandalous manner, that *Constantine*, after he became a Christian, found it necessary to prevent them from interfering in elections. As there was no rule prescribed by the Apostles, with respect to

elections, there was some diversity of practice in different churches; but that Bishops, and Presbyters, and Deacons, were elected by the people in the first three centuries, is very far from being correct. This case, therefore, is totally irrelevant to the point you wish to establish.

Further: If it were even as you say, that the people elected their Bishops till the fourth century, how in the name of common sense, can this be considered as presenting a difficulty equal to that of accounting for the rise of Episcopacy? How do you know, Sir, that the people elected their Bishops? It must be, if at all, from records. Here then the cases are totally dissimilar. You consider the evidence for the people's electing their Bishops clear enough; but with respect to Episcopacy, you acknowledge that its birth cannot be traced. And with respect to the abolition of popular election, you say it began to take place in the fourth century. So then, a thing which is clear, is as difficult to be known as that which is involved in midnight darkness. Pray, Sir, what do you call this?

As to the difficulty of accounting for the people's so "tamely surrendering a right so highly prized," which you seem to think equal to the difficulty of accounting for the Presbyters resigning the power of ordination, you should first have proved that the Christian laity generally exercised that right, as you are pleased to call it; but if you *had* proved it, still the two cases would be totally dissimilar; for

whenever popular elections were abolished, it was done by the *civil power*, which the people could not resist; but no Presbyterian writer has ever hinted, that the right of ordination was taken from the Presbyters by the *civil* authority. The exercise of that right, almost all our opponents acknowledge, ceased long before the conversion of *Constantine*. The difficulty then still continues in full force against you.

The next thing you mention as presenting a difficulty equal to the rise of Episcopacy, is the abolition of the office of *Ruling Elder*. I flatter myself that I have fully proved, in my eighth letter, that there never was any such officer in the Christian church, till the time of *Calvin*. That it is a mere human institution, a great part, if not the greater part of Presbyterians themselves acknowledge; and that nine tenths of the Christian world are against the office, is beyond all controversy. You must, Sir, have very strong reinforcements, to be able to stand your ground upon this point.

Your list of difficulties increase fast upon us. You gravely inform us, that we cannot tell when *Sub-deacons*, *Acolyths*, and *Exorcists* were introduced into the church; and your inference from this must be, that we ought not to urge the difficulty of accounting for the rise of Episcopacy, when we cannot ascertain the time when these *dignified* officers were first created.

Upon reading this, the correctness of Lord

Kaimes' definition of the *ridiculous*, forcibly struck me. He says, it is that "which excites laughter blended with contempt."* *Sub-deacons, Acolyths, and Exorcists!* Why did you not add, *Sextons, Porters, Bell-ringers, and Grave-diggers?* Surely, Sir, you must take your readers for children, when you suppose that they will believe, that the introduction of the first named officers was "calculated to interest the feelings both of the clergy and of the people, and to excite long and violent opposition from various quarters." What was there in the office of a *Sub-deacon* to excite opposition? That officer prepared the sacred vessels and utensils of the altar, and delivered them to the Deacons in time of divine service. He attended the church doors during the time of the communion service; and he went on the Bishop's embassies, with his letters to foreign churches. Was this an office of so much consequence, as to excite commotions in the church, upon its introduction? No one can seriously say, it was.

The *Acolyths* were an order peculiar to the Latin church, and quite unknown to the Greek for four hundred years. It appears from a canon in the fourth council of *Carthage*, that their office was to light the candles, snuff them, furnish the wine for the sacrament, and attend the Bishop. Do you seriously think, Sir, that appointing candle

* *El. Crit.* vol. i. p. 221.

snuffers was calculated to produce commotions in the church? Sir, I am ashamed of this; it is really too bad; far, far too low and ridiculous to come from your pen.

Exorcists began with Christianity itself. In the Apostolic age, all orders of the clergy, and even laymen cast out devils, and this continued to be the case till miracles ceased, which was not till the persecutions of the Christians ceased. This has been abundantly proved by several writers. When this miraculous power of casting out devils ceased, which was at different times in different situations, the order of *Exorcists* was instituted, and this we know was about the middle of the third century; for *Cyprian* mentions this order, and I cannot find any before him that does. The duties of this office were to pray, both in private and public, for the *En-ergumens*, or those who were supposed to be possessed of the devil, to keep them always employed in some innocent business, and to see them provided with daily food. This was a humane office; but it was strongly tinctured with superstition.—All these inferior orders are found in the church in the third century.

When a writer can prevail on himself to give the most distant hint, that the difficulty of determining the time when these petty, servile offices were introduced into the church (even if that were true) is as great as the difficulty of determining the æra

of Episcopacy, it must excite strong suspicion, that all is not right in some quarter or other.

In reviewing your eighth letter, I have thought it best to settle this point, although not in the order you observe, before I consider whether it was morally possible for so great a revolution to take place in so short a time; and whether, if it were, we should not have some notice of it in the records of the church. Let us give these points a fair discussion.

The point of time that I shall take for this supposed revolution, is the middle of the second century, because I am warranted by the concessions of your ablest writers to do so. The assembly of Presbyterian divines in their *Jus. Divin. Minis. Ang.* p. 104, have this question,—“How long was it, that the church of Christ was governed by the common council of Presbyters, without a Bishop set over them? *A. Dr. Blondel*, a man of great reading and learning, undertakes, in a long discourse, to make out that before the year 140, there was not a Bishop over Presbyters.” This gives us the opinion of the English Presbyterian divines, and it differs very materially from yours, as to the point of time when Episcopacy is supposed to have been introduced. *Chamier*, a Protestant divine of the French church, says, that “inequality (of Bishops and Presbyters) was very ancient, and near the times of the Apostles. Nay, that it took place,

the first age having *not yet*, or *scarcely* elapsed.”* Now one of the Apostles, *St. John*, out-lived the first age, dying at *Ephesus*, A. D. 101. *Salmasius* says in his book called *Walo Messalinus*, chap. iv. “About the beginning, or middle of the second age, the first Bishops were placed over the Presbytery.” Another divine of the same church, *Du Moulin*, candidly acknowledges, that “Episcopacy was an Apostolic institution, and whatever name we may give *Timothy* and *Titus*, whether that of Bishops or Evangelists, it is manifest that they had Episcopal successors, who enjoyed their pre-eminence.”† *Bucer*, a divine of the *Swiss* church, acknowledges that, “even in the times of the Apostles themselves, one of the Presbyters was chosen and ordained to be a guide, and, as it were, a Prelate, who went before all the rest, and had the care of souls, and administered the Episcopal office, chiefly and in the highest degree.”‡ With *Bucer* agrees *Calvin*, in his comment on *Titus* i. 5. “At that time (of *Timothy*) there was no equality among the ministers of the church, but some one in authority and council had the pre-eminence.”|| *Baxter*, *Le Clerc*, and *Doddridge*, have been already quoted; the two former, as placing the rise of Episcopacy in the

* Inæqualitatem esse vetustissimam ac vicinam Apostolorum temporibus. Aut non dum elapso, aut vix elapso primo sæculo.

† Ordinem Episcopalem esse juris Apostolici, &c.

‡ L. b. de anima. cura interscripsit. Ang. p. 380.

|| Non eam fuisse tunc aequalitatem inter ecclesiæ ministros, quin unus aliquis auctoritate et consilio præsetet.

Apostolic age ; the *latter*, as placing it in the time of *Ignatius*.

From the concessions of these learned men, I proceed to demonstrate the moral impossibility of a change from Presbytery to Episcopacy, during the second age of the church, when the civil arm was stretched out, not to defend, but to destroy the religion of Christ.

It is, Sir, your own acknowledgment, that the church continued pure till the middle of the second century. If, then, the change took place, while the clergy and people were in a state of purity, you will have a hard task indeed, to reconcile a daring and wicked usurpation with pure and virtuous motives. You will perhaps say, that you do not attempt to reconcile them ; but, on the contrary, that you ascribe the innovation to wicked ambition, which operated so powerfully in the beginning of the fourth, or, at most, towards the close of the third century, as to give a new face to the Christian church. But let our readers consider the great weight of evidence I have produced from the writings of the third century, to prove that Episcopacy existed before that age ; and, to that let them add the acknowledgments of many of our ablest opponents, that the fact is incontestible, and then I ask, whether I am not sufficiently warranted to take my ground in the middle of the second century ? I certainly am, and shall accordingly build my reasoning upon this concession.

It is a maxim in moral science, that no man acts, or *can* act, without a motive. Now, what is the motive that influenced a few of the Presbyters to attempt an assumption of superiority over their brethren? Was it a desire of temporal power? That was entirely out of the question, without the aid of civil authority. And every one knows, that kind of authority was exerted for the destruction of the church. Was it the love of wealth? None resulted from the acquisition, or *could* result from it. The people were generally poor, and the Bishops, as well as the Presbyters and Deacons, were maintained out of the offerings at the altar; and scanty was the fare that proceeded from that source. Was it the love of ease and security? That could not be; for Episcopal superiority greatly increased the labours of the Bishops, and exposed them to almost certain destruction. "As soon (says Bishop *Skinner*) as an edict passed for persecuting the Christians in any part of the church, the Bishops were immediately aimed at, as the most guilty persons, and the first that were exposed to the fury of their persecutors. As their danger was thus imminent, their labour too was often no less severe; for upon them was laid the principal care of the flock, which frequently required the greatest vigilance and attention in the shepherd."* If, then, neither dominion, nor wealth, nor ease, nor security, could

* Answer to Dr. Campbell's Lectures, p. 240, Swords's edit.

possibly be the motive for so daring an attempt, as to deprive the Presbyters of their most sacred rights, those ambitious spirits, as you deem them, must have acted without any motive, which is evidently inconsistent with the very nature and constitution of the human mind.

You seem, Sir, to rest your plausible theory upon the desire of pre-eminence, which, you say very justly, is natural to man. You need not have quoted any instances from scripture to prove this. It is universally acknowledged—universally felt. But what sort of pre-eminence is it that man so much pants after? Is it temporal pre-eminence, that is attended with power, and wealth, and splendor? Or is it spiritual pre-eminence, which, in the early ages of the church, brought to the possessor none of these things; but, on the contrary, brought with it increased labour, and almost certain destruction? No one can be at a loss to determine which. A little, brief, spiritual authority, generally accompanied with bonds, and imprisonment, and death, in the most horrible forms, has very few charms, even to those, in whose breasts the love of power operates strongly. No, Sir, it is the love of *temporal* pre-eminence which so universally actuates human nature; which gratifies so highly the pride of man. This was the kind of pre-eminence which the sons of *Zebedee* requested from the hands of their master. They had not, at the time they made this request, the most distant conception of the

spiritual nature of Christ's kingdom. They supposed that he was to be a *temporal* prince, and that his kingdom was to be altogether of *this world*. Hence their *strife which of them should be accounted the greatest*. Had they known that Christ's kingdom was *not* to be *of this world*, we should not have heard of any strife for that pre-eminence, which brought with it greater labour, and exposed to greater sufferings. So different was the pre-eminence which the Apostles had in view, and that which was acquired by the first Bishops. The one is at all times gratifying to human nature; the other, under such circumstances as have been mentioned, always forbidding, and repulsive. "It would be the height of folly to suppose that any Presbyters, however inordinate their ambition, would seek distinction on the rack and at the stake, would usurpations where relentless persecution would inevitably assail them."* No; human nature loves itself too well for that kind of distinction. A wish for pre-eminence is natural, when it brings its usual gratifications; but where is the man that wishes it, when it brings in its train every thing appalling to human nature?

When we thus examine the constitution of the human mind, and perceive from our own constant and invariable experience, that man cannot possibly

* Hobart's Apology, p. 208. This book ought to be in the hands of every churchman. It contains abundant proof of the divine origin of Episcopacy.

act without motives ; and when we take a view of the circumstances of the primitive church, which, for three ages, was harassed and tormented with bloody persecutions, it appears to me impossible, to name any thing like a motive to attempt the usurpation of Episcopal power. Even to *fancy* a motive is not very obvious ; but if it were, men of understanding will not indulge fancy at the expense of common sense.

But this, Sir, although enough, is not all. You acknowledgè, that the church, till the middle of the second century, preserved her purity. How then, consistently with this state of things, could a few of her Presbyters have devised the wicked project of depriving their brethren of their most sacred rights ? Surely, men of such distinguished virtue and piety as the Bishops of that period are universally acknowledged to have been, could not have entertained a thought so inconsistent with a pure conscience, with peace of mind, and with the hope of future happiness. Could men, who displayed all the meekness and humility of Christians, have attempted a plan of domination so completely at variance with these virtues ? Could men, who endured every thing for the sake of Christ, violate his sacred institution ? Could men, who, to save themselves from the most excruciating torments, would not offer incense at the idol altars, deliberately associate for the purpose of acquiring a trifling authority over their brethren ? What ! *conscientious* in every

thing relating to Christian purity, to Christian manners; and yet *profligate* as to the constitution of the Christian church! Gross inconsistency! Palpable contradiction! No, Sir. If there are any fixed principles in human nature, any motive of human actions, any desire of self-preservation, any regard to consistency of character, any fear of a guilty conscience, any dread of future misery; the first Bishops were not *usurpers*, but *the true and legitimate possessors of Apostolical pre-eminence*.

Further still. Supposing this chimerical plan of depriving the Presbyters of those powers to which they were entitled by the appointment of their Lord and Master, should have entered into the minds of a few ambitious Presbyters, how, in the name of common sense, was it to be effected? They had not the civil authority to aid them. Was it done by the power of eloquence? Did *Cicero* and *Demosthenes* ever persuade men out of their senses? Was it possible for the few usurpers to persuade the Presbyters, and Deacons, and people, that Christ left his church under an Episcopal government, but that by some legerdemain it was changed into a Presbyterian, and that, therefore, it was a duty to revive the primitive institution? I acknowledge that these are silly questions; but I shelter myself under the silliness of the hypothesis which obliges me to ask them. If you answer in the affirmative, they are silly to excess; but if in the negative, they are pertinent and conclusive.

We have now got a step farther. The first Bishops had no conceivable motive for usurping ecclesiastical superiority, and they were too virtuous and pious to attempt it; but, if they had attempted it, there was no possibility of effecting it.

The latter assertion will appear with still brighter evidence, if possible, from the following observations.

The clergy and people of the second century, when this extraordinary revolution is supposed to have taken place, knew as well under what government the Apostles left the church, as you or I do, what was the government of our respective churches, a hundred years ago. There was not any possibility of mistake, or of doubt, about the matter: Well then, what could have induced the clergy and people to submit to an alteration? There must have been some reason for it. What was it? Were they bought by the first Bishops? Poor men! their office afforded them but a scanty income for themselves and their families. Were they overreached by subtle arts, and out-witted by superior talents? So you seem to think. You inform us, "that the nations over which the Christian religion was spread with so much rapidity, were sunk in deplorable ignorance. Grossly illiterate, very few were able to read; and even to these few, manuscripts were of difficult access. At that period, popular eloquence was the great engine of persuasion; and where the character of the mind is not

fixed by reading, and a consequent habit of attentive and accurate thinking, it is impossible to say how deeply and suddenly it may be operated upon by such an engine. A people of this description, wholly unaccustomed to speculations and government; universally subjected to despotic rule in the state; having no just ideas of religious liberty; altogether unfurnished with the means of communicating and uniting with each other, which the art of printing has since afforded; torn with dissensions among themselves, and liable to be *turned about with every wind of doctrine*; such a people could offer little resistance to those who were ambitious of ecclesiastical power.”*

This, Sir, is all very fine; and to those who know no better, I suppose very instructive and convincing. But, Sir, if it were even true, it would no more account for the revolution from Presbytery to Episcopacy, than for the revolution of the heavenly bodies. Does it require literature and science, to enable men to determine under what kind of government they have always lived? In the *state*, is it necessary for men to be philosophers and cultivators of the arts, in order to determine whether they live under a kingly, or republican form of government? In the *church*, cannot they tell whether they are governed by Bishops, or by Presbyters, acting with equal authority, unless they

are learned? Ought they not to confide in what they every day see and hear, unless they are acquainted with philosophy, and mathematics, and political science? Surely, Sir, if the clergy and people were ignorant, and unenlightened by literature, still they did not lose their senses, and their understandings. If they were unacquainted with books, still they must have been well acquainted with the official characters of those, who, in *spirituals*, ruled over them. Here there was no possibility of any mistake. A few learned men could never have made them believe, that the church had not always been Presbyterian, when thousands of them must have been born in the Apostolic age, and have been the children of the earliest converts to Christianity. If Presbytery had been the institution of the Apostles, all the Christians of the second century knew it well, and no eloquence could ever have persuaded them to the contrary. Nay, Sir, if they were even as ignorant as you represent them, and much more so, this very circumstance would have made them more tenacious of what they deemed sacred institutions. The history of mankind evinces, that ignorance and obstinacy are generally united. The most illiterate and unpolished nations are the most inveterate in their resentment against those, who attempt to deprive them of any thing connected with religion. And, on the other hand, the more learned and scientific a nation is, the more speculative and projecting it is. In the

eyes of such a people, old institutions are less venerable than in the eyes of an enlightened people. New things captivate because they are considered as proofs of genius; and old things tire and disgust, because they check genius, and circumscribe talents. The ignorance, then, which you ascribe to the early ages of Christianity, were you even perfectly correct in what you say, instead of diminishing, would increase the difficulties which attend a supposition of a change of government.

But, Sir, whatever may become of this reasoning, whether it be thought conclusive or not, it is very certain that you have given your readers a very fanciful picture of the second and third centuries. Literature was not so low, nor ignorance so prevalent, as you represent it. Eloquence and poetry had indeed declined in *Greece* and *Rome*; but still literature and philosophy were far from being extinguished. The second and third centuries furnished several good writers in the Christian Church — *Tertullian, Arnobius, Ireneus, Clemens of Alexandria, Origen, Cyprian*, and several others. We meet with no complaint of a want of knowledge in those ages, nor for several ages following. There was quite sufficient for every religious purpose, and for preserving the *unity of the faith in the bond of peace*.

Nor was the second century, in which, your best writers *fancy* Episcopacy was introduced, in any degree distinguished for contention and schism,

as you assert. Perhaps there never was a more peaceable period of the Christian church. I do not recollect a single controversy that produced any mischievous effects. The dispute about the time of keeping Easter was the only one of any moment; and that was conducted without violence, and without schism. Both parties retained their own custom till the council of *Nice*, which happily terminated the dispute.

And here let me make an observation, which, I think, ought to carry conviction to every mind. If the Eastern and Western Churches were so tenacious of such an unessential point, as the time of keeping a festival, that neither would yield to the other, how is it possible to suppose, that all the clergy and people throughout the Christian world, would have quietly submitted to an alteration of that sacred regimen, which Christ had established in his church? And, further, how is it possible to suppose, that when we have so minute an account of this controversy, which in itself was of no material consequence, we should not have one single testimony in all antiquity, that the church was changed from a Presbyterian to an Episcopal regimen? This is a wonderful circumstance. In the second and third centuries we have detailed accounts of the progress of heresies, of schisms, of disputes between Bishops, and between Presbyters and Bishops; but not the least hint of a change which deprived the Presbyters of their most sacred

rights, and which, therefore, was calculated to produce the most violent convulsions throughout the Christian world. Sir, I could as easily believe all the fictions of the *Arabian Night's Entertainments*, of *Don Quixotte*, of *Gulliver's Travels*, of *Amadis of Gaul*, as believe this story. It is incredible—it is unreasonable. Yet it seems any account of the matter will do, when a hypothesis is to be served; when those passions are to be consulted, which always entwine themselves with principles once avowed, and with interests once established.

Let us now see how you surmount all these difficulties. The consideration of this point shall occupy the first part of my next *letter*.

LETTER XIX.

REV. SIR,

YOUR manner of accounting for the silence of the primitive writers, with respect to a revolution in the government of the Christian Church, is as follows:—"Nor is it wonderful that we find so little said concerning those usurpations in the early records of antiquity. There was probably but little written on the subject; since those who were most ambitious to shine as writers, were most likely to be forward in making unscriptural claims themselves; and, of course, would be little disposed to record their own shame. It is likewise probable, that the little that was written on such a subject would be lost; because the art of *printing* being unknown, and the trouble and expense of multiplying copies being only incurred for the sake of possessing *interesting* and *popular* works, it was not to be expected that writings so hostile to the ambition and vices of the clergy would be much read, if it were possible to suppress them. And when to these circumstances we add, that literature, after the fourth century, was chiefly in the hands of ecclesiastics; that many important works written in

the three first centuries, are known to be lost; and that of the few which remain, some are acknowledged on all hands to have been grossly corrupted, and radically mutilated, we cannot wonder that so little in explanation of the various steps of clerical usurpation has reached our times.*”

It seems then, from this account, that we are not to look for any records of this wonderful usurpation; because those who were the most capable of writing, would be the very men who would most probably have usurped Episcopal pre-eminence; and they would not, you think, record their own shame. But were there none who were capable of writing, but the comparatively small number of usurping Bishops? Was the eloquent *Tertullian* one of the usurpers? Has not he left various writings? Has he given any hint about this anti-Christian usurpation? Would he have recorded his own shame by so doing? Nay, Sir, has not this Presbyter, who had every motive to brand with infamy these usurpers, declared in the most explicit terms, that all spiritual power is derived from Episcopal ordination? That neither Presbyter nor Deacon has a right to baptize without the Bishop's authority? Does not he challenge the heretics to produce a list of their Bishops, from the Apostles, as the Catholics could? What could have induced *Tertullian* to be silent with respect to this usurpation, if it had

ever existed? Or rather, what could have induced him to assert such a shameless falsehood, as that Episcopacy was of Apostolical institution, if it was not a notorious fact? What also could have induced the learned *Clemens of Alexandria* to be silent upon this point? Was he one of the usurping Bishops? Would he have recorded his own shame by lifting up his voice against the usurpation? Or rather, would he not have been highly culpable, if he had been silent? But we hear no remonstrance from him. On the contrary, we find him declaring that the Apostles left three orders in the church—Bishops, Priests, and Deacons. We have the same testimony from the profoundly learned *Origen*. He also was but a Presbyter; and therefore one of the sufferers under this unchristian domination. He had, too, a peculiar motive for unmasking the imposition. He conceived himself to have been ill treated by his Bishop. Yet, irritated as he was, he declares Episcopacy to be of divine appointment. Did he not know how the matter was? Was he an idiot, or a knave? Was he afraid to tell the truth, or had he any motive for telling a lie? Surely, Sir, we have got to a strange pass, when such monstrous fictions are imposed upon mankind?

But why are the Christian Bishops to be excluded from bearing their testimony to Episcopacy? Oh! *they were the usurpers, and of course could not record their own shame.* Was *Ignatius* a usurper?

Does the man who had been forty years Bishop of *Antioch*, who had been ordained to that office by Apostolic imposition of hands, and who encountered for the sake of Christ, death in one of its most horrible forms, deserve that character? Did he, virtuous and pious as he was, go out of the world with a lie in his mouth? Did this martyr, who declares over and over again, that the office which he bore was of divine institution, record his own shame? Was *Polycarp*, the venerable and pious Bishop of *Smyrna*, one of those usurping Prelates? He must have had a principal hand in the business, if *Blondel* and the *Westminster* divines have *guessed* right; for he lived at the very time when, they say, this flagitious revolution was effected. Was this distinguished character, who recommended in strong terms the epistles of *Ignatius*, in which the divine right of Episcopacy is repeatedly asserted, and who, from recommending them, must have been of the same opinion; was, I say, *Polycarp* one of those usurpers? Did he go out of the world, triumphing in the flames, and exulting in the hope of happiness, when he had upon his soul the guilt of destroying that sacred regimen which Christ left in his church? Was he tenacious of the time of keeping Easter, which was of no material consequence; but regardless of the constitution of the Christian church? If these questions will admit of an answer in the affirmative, then the nature of man is totally different from what it was in the early ages of the church.

At that time, *great events* were not recorded, while the *most insignificant* were. At that time, revolutions were effected by *simple volition*; but ever since they have required *vigorous action*. Then the government of the Church was subverted without the least notice, noise, or contention; but *now* it would excite the greatest commotions, and most virulent animosities. In *that age* men loved misery; but now they abhor it. Then art and intrigue possessed magical power, and were irresistible; *now*, their influence may be effectually counteracted. In short, a total revolution has taken place in the human mind, as well as in the Church. Its principles, its motives, its feelings, its powers, have undergone a complete change.

Surely, Sir, I need not go on naming other distinguished lights of the Church in the second and third centuries. I need not say any thing about *Hegesippus*, and *Justin Martyr*, and *Melito*, and *Polycrates*, and *Theophilus*, and *Ireneus*, and several others in the second century; and *Miltiades*, and *Minutius Felix*, and *Alexander of Jerusalem*, and *Cyprian*, and *Cornelius*, and many more in the third century; several of whom left writings behind them, in which there is not a tittle about a change of government; and all of them were men of distinguished piety, eminent virtue, and respectable talents. To talk of these men being either usurpers themselves, or encouragers of usurpation, either by word or deed, in others; or of even keeping silence during

its progress, or after it took place, is such an outrage committed upon probability, that it is inconceivable to me how any one can possibly be guilty of it. Yet such is the fact, that you are guilty of it, whether it can be accounted for or not.

You go on, Sir, in the same unvaried strain of conjecture and fancy. You think it "probable that the little that was written on such a subject, [a change of government] would be lost; because the art of printing being unknown, and the trouble and expense of multiplying copies being only incurred for the sake of possessing *interesting* and *popular* works, it was not to be expected that writings so hostile to the ambitious views of the Clergy, would be much read, if it were possible to suppress them." It seems then, that you know, or at least think it probable, that in several works which are lost, there was some account of this revolution. Was there ever such an argument as this from a man who wishes to be deemed a reasoner! At this rate, what is to become of the best attested facts? A sceptic has nothing to do but to say, "it is probable that the little that was written" in opposition to those facts, is lost; but if we had those writings, it is very likely that we should have a very different story. Or if the art of printing had been known, it is very probable that those books which contradict the alleged facts, would have been so much multiplied as to preclude their total destruction, and then those pretended facts would appear gross imposi-

tions. What a *sweeping* way of reasoning is this! Might not the Deists, at this rate, argue against the Gospel History, that "perhaps there were accounts published concerning our blessed Saviour by good hands, directly contrary to those in the Gospels now extant, although they are entirely lost, as many books of the adversaries of christianity are known to be? And how easily may they argue against the reasonableness of our receiving the books of the New Testament upon the testimony of the Fathers, that we know not what they all thought; that many of them are lost, which, perhaps, contradicted the testimony of the remaining part? Would it not be a sufficient reply to such persons, that nothing can be more unreasonable than to reject the concurrent testimony of all, or most of the writers extant, upon so groundless a supposition as this? Nay, that it is more reasonable to think, that the writers not extant, bore witness to the same things, and that if they believe any thing upon the testimony of past writers, they ought in reason to believe this, because the same surmises lie against all historians?"*

I have now, I flatter myself, proved the extreme weakness of your reasoning to show the *possibility* and *probability* of a change from Presbytery to Episcopacy. And if the human mind cannot act without motives; if no motive can possibly

* Hoadley's brief Defence of Episcopal Ordination, p. 18, 19:

be assigned consistently with the universally acknowledged principles of human actions; if a change which deprived the Presbyters of the Church of their most sacred rights, and was in the highest degree calculated to produce the most violent opposition, and the most rancorous enmity; if, notwithstanding, no opposition was excited, and not a hint given by any writer of antiquity, that such a revolution took place; but, on the contrary, if every author who mentions the subject founds Episcopacy upon Apostolical institution; then the conclusion is irresistible, that no change took place; but that from the beginning of the Christian Church there was no such thing as *parity*, but a real distinction of office and character.

Notwithstanding the reasoning upon which I rest this conclusion, is drawn from the nature of the human mind, from the well known circumstances of the Church in the second and third centuries, from the universally acknowledged virtue and piety of those who must necessarily have been concerned in this flagitious usurpation, and from the total silence of all antiquity upon the subject; yet, you venture to assert that a change was not only *practicable* and *probable*, but that it *actually took place*. Well, Sir, let us now try this point.

And here I would observe, that all you have said to prove that a change *actually took place*, is nothing more than you had said in different parts of your book; to which I have given a very particular an-

swer. But as you have, by way of recapitulation, again brought to view the same points, it may be expedient for me to repeat, in as concise a manner as possible, my replies.

1. You urge the indiscriminate use of scripture titles. This has been fully answered over and over again. It has been evinced, that the community of names amounts to nothing at all. There were during the lives of the Apostles three orders in the Church—Apostles, Bishops or Presbyters, and Deacons; and in the next age, the successors of the Apostles were styled Bishops, who had under them, Presbyters and Deacons. This is generally the language used by the writers of all ages succeeding the first; and whenever the Fathers style a Bishop a Presbyter, which is very seldom, it is done with propriety, as the greater implies the less. “It is not necessary to repeat the proof of these positions. They will, therefore, be assumed as established points.” But when you tell us, that “in the writings of the third century, we begin to perceive a style of expression indicating a commencement of a distinction between Bishops and Presbyters,” you assert what has been abundantly proved to be erroneous; for I have shown that the writers of the second century, particularly *Ignatius*, used the same distinctive language; and that arose not from “a change in the *nature of the offices*,” but from the fact, that the Bishops succeeded to the Apostolical pre-eminence; and that, therefore, there

was no alteration in the regimen of the Church, as Presbyterian writers gratuitously assert.

2. You repeat your declaration, that *Jerome, Hilary, and Chrysostom*, writers of the fourth century, maintain that a change took place *after* the Apostolic age; but I have shown from their express assertions, that they held Episcopacy to be an Apostolic institution; and their testimonies "are so pointed and unquestionable, and so formally stated, that they must silence even prejudice and sophistry themselves. Were not these learned men as likely to *understand* the subject on which they wrote as any of the present day? Is it credible that they should be *totally* deceived concerning a fact, which, if it did not fall under their own observation, must have been personally witnessed by their predecessors? It is not credible. Yet unless we suppose these writers to have been either deceived or dishonest,"* the Episcopal form of church government was of Apostolic and divine institution.

3. You observe that "Prelacy was first embraced in populous and wealthy cities." This is perfectly correct. It was first embraced in *Jerusalem, Antioch, Rome, Alexandria, &c.* and, from these seats of primitive purity, it spread into the neighbouring countries, and became general.

You next observe, that "*Hilary* and others declare that many of the *African* Presbyters continued

* Page 305.

to exercise the *ordaining* power until the middle of the fourth century." I have fully proved, in my second *letter*, that *Hilary* says no such thing. The word he uses is *consignant*, not *ordinant*. *Consigno* was generally applied to baptism, sometimes to confirmation, but perhaps never to ordination. Who the others are that bear this testimony, you have not told us, and therefore it is needless to inquire. If *you*, Sir, have discovered any thing of this kind, it is more than any of your predecessors discovered. The secret was certainly worth disclosing.

Next, Sir, you inform us, that "the churches in *Scotland* remained *Presbyterian* in their government, from the introduction of Christianity into that country, in the *second* century, until the *fifth* century, when *Palladius* succeeded in introducing Diocesan Bishops;" and you say, in a note, that "this fact is ascertained by the writings of *Major*, *Fordon*, and Archbishop *Usher*." Well, Sir, if this be true, here is something that looks like an *exception* to the general rule and practice, from whatever cause it proceeded. But if this whole story should turn out to be a mere fiction, it will certainly put you into a very unpleasant predicament. Let us give this point a fair examination, and see how the matter will terminate.

It is, I believe, universally acknowledged, that the first inhabitants of North-Britain, of whom we have any records, were the *Picts*, who are supposed to have been a colony from Scandinavia. Accord-

ing to *Bede*, who wrote 700 years before *Fordon*, the *South Picts* were converted to the Christian faith in the year 412, by *Nennianus*, a British Bishop, who had been educated at *Rome*, and who, of course, would plant Episcopacy among them. I know it may be said, upon the authority of *Prosper*, a contemporary writer, that Pope *Cælestine* sent, in the year 431, *Palladius*, whom he ordained a Bishop, to the *Scots that believed in Christ*. Now, the question is, who are meant by the *Scots*? According to *Usher*, *Stillingfleet*, *Loyd*, and, I believe, the generality of historians, those who are now called *Scots*, are the descendants of a colony from *Ireland*, which was anciently called *Scotia*. If so, *Palladius*' mission was not to the people now called *Scots*, but to the people of *Ireland*. One thing is beyond dispute, because all history asserts it, that *Palladius* did preach the Gospel in that country before *St. Patrick*, and converted a few to the Christian faith. And it appears from another passage quoted by Bishop *Loyd* from *Prosper*, that this is the true sense of the passage just produced. "*Cælestine* having ordained a Bishop for the *Scots*, while he endeavours to keep the *Roman Island* Catholic, hath also made the *Barbarous Island* Christian. Where, as by the *Roman Island*, he means *Britain*, which other writers likewise call by that name; so, by the *Barbarous Island* opposed to it, he means *Ireland*."*

* *Loyd's Anc. Ch. Gov. &c.* p. 51, 52.

Bishop *Loyd*, to settle this point, quotes several other authorities. First, *Nennius*, who says, that “Bishop *Palladius* was sent at first (before *Patrick*) by *Cælestine*, the Roman Bishop and Pope, to convert the *Scots* to Christ;” adding, that “*Palladius* went from *Ireland*, and came into *Britain*, and died there in the land of the *Picts*.”* *Loyd* next quotes *Probus*, in the life of *St. Patrick*. “*Palladius* had been sent (before him) by Pope *Cælestine* to convert this island; but God hindered him from converting that nation (of the *Scots*); for these rugged and wild men would not receive his doctrine, nor would he stay any long time in a land which was not his; but was disposed to return to him that sent him; and when in order to this, *Palladius* had passed the sea, and was come to the confines of the *Picts*, there he died.”† *Loyd* gives us also a similar testimony from, *Jocelin*, who says, “Because the *Irish* believed not his (*Palladius*’) preaching, but most obstinately opposed him, he departed from their country; and in his way to *Rome*, he died in *Britain*, near the confines of the *Picts*.”‡ And *Loyd* further observes, that “it was above 120 years, that the *North Picts* still continued in their gentilism. And then, about the year 560, *St. Columba*, who was a *Scot*, came over out of *Ireland*, and having obtained the isle of *Hy*, where he

* Csl. 52, in Usher’s Copy. † Vita Pat. lib. i. col. 239.

† Joce. vita Patricii, c. 25.

‡ See *Loyd*’s ancient Church Government, p. 57.

founded a monastery, he and the monks that he brought with him, converted King *Brudius*, and his nation to the faith of Christ.”*

It appears now, Sir, from these testimonies, that the people of *North-Britain* were not (as you say) converted to the Christian faith in the second century, but in the beginning of the fifth, by *Nennianus*, a British Bishop, who, of course, would put the Church under an Episcopal regimen; and that *Palladius* was not the planter of Episcopacy among them, he having been sent by *Cælestine* to *Ireland*, where he stayed but a short time, in consequence of the little success he had in that country.

I know of nothing that can be opposed to this, but the testimony of *Fordon*. Let us examine what he says, and then we shall be at no loss to determine how the matter stands.

This writer was a Priest of the diocese of *St. Andrews*, and Chaplain of the Church of *Aberdeen*. He lived in the time of the Kings *Robert* the second and third, and compiled the history of the *Scots* in five books, bringing it down to the death of King *David* the first, in 1153, which, with continuations by other hands to the death of *James* the first, in 1437, is commonly known by the title of *Scotichronicon*, or the *Scots Chronicle*. Now, says *Skinner* in his *Ecclesiastical History*,† “all he says on the subject is, that in the seventh year of the Emperor

* Page 69. † Vol. i. p. 27, 28.

Severus, Victor, the first of the name, and fourteenth after *St. Peter*, an *African*, and son of one *Felix*, sat in the papal chair ten years, two months, and twelve days. Under him the *Scots* received the Christian faith in the year of our Lord 203." This, it seems, is all the information that can be got from *Fordon*. He quotes no authorities; and as he lived 1100 years after the supposed conversion of the *Scots*, and contradicts authors who lived some centuries before him, his assertion, that *Scotland* was christianized in the beginning of the third century, is not entitled to the least regard.

About 140 years after *Fordon*, came out *Hector Boece's* history of *Scotland*, in the year 1526. He repeats the same story, with the embellishment of an embassy to *Victor* from *Donald*, a king of *Boece's*, or some other person's creating; for there is no evidence that there existed at that time any king by that name. *Skinner* says, "*Boece* was obliged to coin a king of his own: for hitherto he had met with no such name, not in any of the traditional genealogies of the old *Shannachies* (or *Bards*); nor in *Fordon's* history, which, though he had it in his possession, he never once mentions; nor in the history which he himself says *Bishop Elphinstone* wrote, and which he proposes to follow; nor in the *Breviary of Aberdeen*, drawn up and printed by that *Bishop's* order in 1509; in none of which is a word of a king *Donald*, or any thing looking that way. And if so, what becomes of all the subsequent

plans that we meet with of church affairs in *Boece* and his followers; such as king *Crathilinth's* ejecting the Druids out of *Man*, and planting Christian clergy in their room, and the like? And what stress can be laid upon the accounts of church government, given us in consequence of such an unsupported hypothesis, by some of our professed historians, that in these old times the *Scots* were instructed in the faith by Priests and Monks without Bishops.*

But, Sir, were I to admit *Fordon's* testimony in its full force, it would be of no disservice to *us*, nor of any advantage to *you*. He says, that the *Scots* were converted to Christianity in the year 203, under the direction of Pope *Victor*. This, by the acknowledgment of your ablest writers, is fifty years after the general introduction of Episcopacy; and, therefore, we must of necessity conclude, that the Church of *Scotland* was established under that form of government.

You go on, Sir, in the same strain of misconception and misrepresentation. You say, "It also appears, from the most authentic history, that the *country* churches generally maintained the primitive plan of government much longer than those of the cities, and were from one to two centuries later in receiving Episcopacy as a superior order. The ministers of these *country* congregations were

* Hist. vol. i. p. 57, 38.

called *Chorepiscopi*, or country Bishops. They continued to exercise full Episcopal powers a considerable time after the Presbyters within and near the great cities had become subject to diocesans; until at length the influence of the Bishop of *Rome*, and of some other ambitious Prelates, procured a decree of the Council of *Sardis* to suppress the *Chorepiscopi* entirely.”

Here, Sir, you take for granted what you certainly ought to have fully proved, viz. That the *Chorepiscopi* were mere Presbyters. But no; you have said it, and that is proof sufficient. Had you consulted such respectable authors as *Barlow*, *Hammond*, *Beridge*, and *Cave*, perhaps you would have received some benefit from the perusal. Had you only consulted *Bingham*, you would have found him asserting, that even *Blondel*, the great champion of Presbytery, has a long dissertation to prove, that all the *Chorepiscopi* mentioned in the ancient councils were properly Bishops. “And there needs no further proof of this (says *Bingham*) than what *Athanasius* says in his second apology, where he puts a manifest distinction betwixt Presbyters and the *Chorepiscopi*. For speaking of the regular promotion of *Ischyras*, who was made Bishop of the region of the *Mareotis* by the *Eusebian* faction, he says, *Mareotis* was only a region of *Alexandria*, and never held either Bishop or *Chorepiscus* among them, but only Presbyters fixed each in their respective villages, or churches. This, as *Blondel* well observes, shows

evidently, that the *Chorepiscopi* were not the same with Presbyters, however the forger of the *decretal Epistles*, under the name of *Leo* and *Damasus*, would have the world to believe so.”*

It being then sufficiently evident that the *Chorepiscopi* were proper Bishops, the reason assigned by the council of *Sardis* for the abolition of them, is of no manner of consequence as to the point under discussion. As you quote it, the reason is—*Ne vilescat nomen Episcopi*, i. e. *Lest the title of a Bishop should become too cheap.* Well, Sir, what do you infer from this? Is there any thing in this reason assigned by the council favourable to Presbytery? I really cannot perceive it. But you do. “The reason (you say) is remarkable.” Remarkable for what? Perspicuity? Very learned men have been at a loss to give a tolerable sense to the reason assigned by the council. But you, Sir, see no difficulties at all. You first take for granted that the *Chorepiscopi* were mere Presbyters, and then you suppose that the ambitious city Bishops, desirous to get rid of these independent ministers, influenced the council to pass a canon against them. This indeed is very concise; but I cannot see that it is very rational. For how does it make the name of a Bishop cheap, if the *Chorepiscopi* were only Presbyters? I should suppose that it is an unnecessary multiplication of Bishops, and placing them in ob-

* *Antiq.* vol. i. p. 173, oct. Edit. See also Heylin on *Epis.* p. 308, 309.

scure villages, that would be likely to make them cheap. To prevent this, and also to put a stop to the liberty which they took of ordaining without the *license* of the city Bishops, to whom they were subjected by the canons of the Church, that *degree* of Bishops was abolished by the council of *Sardis*. This seems to be the most probable interpretation of the words—*Lest the title of a Bishop should become cheap*. But if the *Chorepiscopi* were mere Presbyters, I cannot see the least sense in the words.

More need not be said upon this point. Your next assertion, that “the churches of the vallies in *Savoy* and *Piedmont*, were still more successful in supporting primitive Episcopacy,” has been fully answered. In our sense of the words *primitive Episcopacy*, it is, I am well satisfied, perfectly correct; but in your sense of the words it is utterly inconsistent with historical verity. The people whom you mention, were the *Waldenses*; and I have given ample proof, that they were Episcopal. From them the *Bohemians* derived their Bishops. Of this also I have given decisive evidence. I will, however, add what Dr. *Maurice* says upon this point. “Before the *Lutheran* reformation was that of the *Bohemians*; whose churches were governed by Diocesan Bishops; and where discipline was so far from being impossible, notwithstanding the dioceses were very large, that they were perhaps the best governed churches in the world. *Bucer*, speaking of this government, says, *Hæc vero est cælestis potius,*

*quam Ecclesiastica in terris Hierarchia; i. e. This is indeed rather a heavenly than an Ecclesiastical Hierarchy upon earth. And Calvin was so taken with this government, as well as discipline, that he looks upon their governing and ordaining Pastors as no inconsiderable blessing. Neque vero parvò est estimandum quod tales habent Pastores a quibus regantur et ordinentur; i. e. Neither is it to be lightly esteemed that they have such Pastors by whom they may be governed and ordained; and those were their Bishops, as may be seen in that account they gave of themselves in Ratio Disciplina, Ordinisque Ecclesiastici in unitate fratrum Bohemorum. Whoever would know more of these Episcopal Diocesan churches, may consult Lasitius, or the short account of Comenius, the then only remaining Bishop of those churches. And these had such Bishops as were not only invested with the full authority of Diocesans, over several churches, but such as had been ordained according to the canons of the ancient church, by the Bishops of the Waldenses, who derived themselves by an uninterrupted succession from the Apostles.**

“All these circumstances prove that” Presbytery is “an innovation. If it had been the Apostolical model, then those churches which were most remote from worldly influence, and discovered the greatest love for primitive simplicity, would have

* Vind. Prim. Ch. p. 373, 374.

been ever found adhering to the system of" Presbytery "with peculiar zeal. Instead of this, the more we examine the records of antiquity, the more we shall find precisely the reverse to be the fact. A circumstance which plainly evinces that" Episcopacy "was both the doctrine and practice of the Apostolic age; and that" Presbytery "is the invention of man, and was introduced long afterwards."*

Your fourth observation is, that "the decrees of some of the *early Councils* concerning Bishops, clearly evince that such a change as we have supposed, really took place. It is impossible to look into the decrees of the numerous councils which were convened within the first five or six centuries, without perceiving constant provision made on the one hand, for gradually extending the power of the Bishops; and, on the other, for restraining the encroachments of those whose ambition had become inordinate and offensive."

This account, were it even correct, is nothing to the point in debate. Restraining the encroachments of Bishops, or gradually extending their power, proves that there *were* Bishops, whose power was restrained, or extended; and as we know that there were *provincial* councils convened in the second century, then the canons of those councils relating to the Bishops of that age, prove

* Letter viii. p. 307, 308. Mutatis mutandis.

the existence of Bishops. And, no doubt, those canons form a part of that evidence, which induced your most learned writers to concede, that Episcopacy became the government of the church in the second century. And thus, the very canons of which you speak, instead of disproving, completely prove the antiquity of Episcopal regimen. What a curiosity in the region of controversy is this! All the councils, of which we have any account, were composed of Bishops. These councils sometimes found it necessary to check Episcopal encroachments; at other times, to extend Episcopal jurisdiction; therefore, the Bishops who were the objects of those canons, did not exist. This is strange. It appears to me, that, on the contrary, most men would say, they *did* exist. Could you, Sir, produce the decree of a council of Presbyters, establishing over themselves and the people, Episcopal superiors; then indeed we should have a clear account of the origin of Episcopacy, posterior to the Apostolic age; and this is what in reason ought to be produced by those who talk about the human invention of Episcopacy. But no mortal has ever produced such a decree of the universal church; and, therefore, if we had no other argument than *this*, for the Apostolic origin of Episcopacy, it seems to me that it would be quite sufficient to convince an unprejudiced mind. Every effect must have a cause; every stream must have a source. Nothing less than a decree made by the representa-

tion of the whole church, could have changed an institution so highly important as that of the constitution of the Christian ministry; but as no such decree can be produced, it fairly follows, that Episcopacy proceeded from Apostolic authority.

You go on, Sir, under your fourth head, to repeat what you had before observed, "that country Bishops should no longer be allowed to ordain," to which an answer has been given; and further you say, that "a canon was enacted that *city Presbyters* should not ordain *out of their own parishes*, without having permission of the *city Bishops*." And your inference from these decrees is, "that Presbyters had been before allowed to ordain; and that Bishops were gradually undergoing a change from the *parochial* to the *diocesan* character."

The thirteenth canon of the council of *Ancyra* is, no doubt, that which you had in view. But why, Sir, did you not name the *council* and the *canon*? You certainly know, that when a disputant does not refer to his authorities, he is not entitled to a reply. But, waving this, I presume you know, that this canon has occasioned a great deal of learned disquisition. Both the text and the interpretation are involved in much difficulty. *Bingham* observes, that "the old translators give a sense to the canon different from that of modern expositors." Their sense is, that "the city Presbyters shall do nothing without the license and authority of the Bishop in any part of the diocese belonging to his jurisdic-

tion;”* that is, that they shall do nothing belonging to their office; but ordination never was a part of their office; and, therefore, the canon does not comprehend that particular. He further observes, that “some Greek copies read it ἐν ἑτέρᾳ παρακίᾳ, which seems to signify that Presbyters shall not officiate in another diocese, without *letters dimissory* from their own Bishop.”†

There is undoubtedly great obscurity in this canon. Dr. *Hammond* observes, that there is a great variety of copies, which, when he had carefully compared, he found the canon was maimed, and that two words are wanting to make it sense, and to reconcile it with the universal voice of antiquity. The words that should be supplied are *πραττεῖν τι* quidpiam facere; and then the canon will run thus in Latin: *Sed neque Presbyteris civitatis, sine mandato ab Episcopo per literas recepto, quidpiam facere in unaquaque paræcia; i. e.* “Neither is it allowed the *city Presbyters* to do any thing without the Bishop’s license or direction in any parish or diocese.” This is precisely the doctrine of *Ignatius, Tertullian, Cyprian, Chrysostom, Jerome*, the Apostolical canons, and the tenth canon of the council of *Antioch*; and, therefore, it affords reasonable ground of presumption, that Dr. *Hammond*

* Ex versione Dionysii Exigui: Sed nec Presbyteris Civitatis, sine præcepto Episcopi, amplius aliquid imperare, nec sine auctoritate Literarum ejus in unaquaque parochia aliquid agere.

† Antiq. vol. i. p. 84, 85.

is right in inserting the words *quidpiam facere*. He confirms this emendation by the versions of *Isidorus Mercator*, *Gentianus Hervetus*, (deemed ancient by *Blondel* himself,) and by the 57th canon of the council of *Laodicæa*, which runs in almost the same words—*Similiter et Presbyteri præter consilium Episcopi nihil agant; i. e.* “Likewise, let the Presbyters do nothing contrary to the will or counsel of the Bishop.”*

Du Pin also observes, that “this canon is imperfect, and that something must be supplied to make it sense; for what (says he) mean these words, *Nor to the city Presbyters in another parish without the permission of their Bishops?* Had Priests ever power to ordain other Priests in their own churches? Had they ever permission to do it out of their own churches by the Bishop’s letters? Why should not the *Suffragans*, (*Chorepiscopi*) who were above the priests, have the same power? There must be something added. See what *Dionysius Exiguus* added, in his version: *No more is it lawful for Priests to do any thing in the diocese, without the permission of the Bishop in writing.* This addition is found in the ancient code of the Romish church, published by *Quesnellus*, and in the version of *Isidore*; and *Justellus* has restored it in the Greek text of the code of the universal church.”†

* Dissert. tertia de omnibus Evangeliorum Periœchis, &c. c. 9.

† Eccles. Hist. vol. i. p. 249.

The observation of *Du Pin*, that the text of the canon is in a very corrupt state, from the circumstance of city Presbyters having been allowed to ordain without the Bishop's license, previously to the passing of the canon, while the *Chorepiscopi*, who were true and proper Bishops, were restricted from the exercise of that part of their office, carries with it great force. There is no way of removing from the canon, the charge of inconsistency with the principles and practice of the church at the time when it was formed, but by adding the words, *to do any thing*, as has been done by the ablest and best writers, both ancient and modern.

I have dwelt the longer upon this point, to show the very singular way you have of settling every thing, however obscure and difficult. You assert roundly, and there is an end of the matter. But surely, Sir, there must be *some* among your readers, who will not be put off in this way. There must be *some*, however predisposed to receive your assertions, that will be staggered when they find adduced so many instances in your work of unfair management, and so many proofs given of your contradicting well-authenticated facts. This last instance of *arbitrary* decision is not the *least*, and I believe it will not be the *last*, of this very censurable catalogue.

Before I go on to your fifth head of observations, I would just observe, that it is an argument against Episcopacy which one would not have expected

from a man of sense and a scholar, that there have been Bishops who attempted to extend their authority beyond its due limits. Yes, Sir, this is undoubtedly true; but is it not equally true, that Presbyters and Deacons have done the same? With respect to the latter, does not *Jerome* tell you so? And with respect to the former, is not history full of it? I name but one of these Presbyters—*Calvin*, (supposing him to be such) the Apostle of *Geneva*. Consider his conduct, and be silent for ever.

Under your fifth head you say,—“ The gradual diminution of the number of Bishops, after the first three centuries, serves to confirm the fact for which I am contending. The great number of Bishops found in the early ages of the church, was remarked in a former letter. They appear to have been as numerous within two or three centuries of the Apostolic age, as modern *parish ministers*. But as we recede from that period, we find their number gradually diminishing, in exact proportion as their claims and honours became extended. In the island of *Crete*, where we are informed that in early times there were *one hundred* Bishops, in a few centuries afterwards we find but *twelve*. In a small district in *Asia*, where, in the third century, there were settled *one hundred and five* Bishops, in two or three centuries their number was reduced to *nine*.—What is the obvious inference from these facts? That primitive Bishops were a very different class of officers from those which bore that name

three or four centuries afterwards; and, consequently, that during this period an important change had taken place in the character and powers of Bishops."

Here, Sir, you give us a story very different from that you told us in your fifth letter.* *Now*, you say, after the third century the number of Bishops decreased; *then*, you represented their numbers in the fourth and fifth centuries as enormously great—

Thick as in spring the flowers adorn the land
Or leaves the trees——

One of the councils in the fifth century, you say, was composed of 6000 Bishops. Here then must have been a prodigious *increase* of Bishops, after the period you have assigned for their *diminution*. And in the same century, you assert, that the council of a single province in *Africa*, was composed of between five and six hundred Bishops. Where now is the diminution of Bishops after the third century? The fact is, that Bishops in the Apostolic age were but few, while Presbyters were very numerous. There were several Elders at *Jerusalem*, and but one Bishop, *St. James*. That was also the case at *Ephesus*, and *Crete*, and *Philippi*, and *Alexandria*, and *Rome*, and other places. In the second century we find the Bishops much increased, in consequence of the diffusion of Chris-

* Page 198, 199.

tianity; but the Presbyters, from the same cause, increased proportionably. This continued to be the case during the subsequent ages. The increase of Bishops in *Africa* in particular, after the schism of the *Donatists*, was enormously great; those schismatics placing a Bishop of their own, wherever the Catholics had one.* But after the Roman Empire was torn to pieces by the northern barbarians, a considerable change took place. The number of Bishops was in some places lessened; and after the conquest of the *Saracens* in the East, many flourishing churches were entirely extinguished, and most of them greatly diminished both as to clergy and people. The frequent revolutions which took place in the Eastern and Western Empires, produced a constant change in the number of Bishops; generally on grounds of a political nature, in no way connected with the spiritual nature of the office. But what argument can be drawn from all this against the Apostolic origin of Episcopacy, is beyond my comprehension. Whether Bishops have been more or less numerous at different periods, has no more to do with the origin of their office, than with the origin of Presbytery, or of Independency.

* How strangely is the world altered in this respect! The very heretics and schismatics took care always to have Bishops; for they knew that otherwise it would be an unanswerable argument against them in the mouths of the Catholics. Just the reverse is the case at present.

What you say, Sir, with respect to the island of *Crete*, and a small district in *Asia*, wants to be supported by competent authority. What author says that there were a hundred Bishops in that island in early times? Till I saw your book I had never heard of it. I have consulted *Eusebius* in those parts of his history, in which one would naturally look for such an account. But I can find nothing like it. *Bingham*, who has given the most correct view of the primitive dioceses, speaks a language very different from your's. His words are, "In the isle of *Crete*, *Carolus a Sancto Paulo* names eleven dioceses. The *Notitia* of *Leo Sapiens*, in *Leunclavius*, makes them twelve; but *Hierapetra* is there, by mistake of some transcriber, divided into two, which being corrected, reduces them to the same number. Whence I conclude, this was pretty near the standing number for several ages."*

It now appears, I think, very evident, that you are at variance with yourself upon this point; but putting that out of the question, you are at variance with the best authorities we have upon the extent of dioceses, and the number of Bishops in the primitive ages. But if you were even correct, still your inference with respect to the origin of Episcopacy, has nothing to do with the position, that the number of Bishops decreased after the third century. That is easily accounted for, from the well known

events which took place in the Eastern and Western Empires, and from that constant mutability which attends all human affairs.

The last circumstance which you advance in favour of your hypothesis is, "that it is confirmed by the most learned and impartial historians;" and of these you mention three—*Mosheim*, *Gibbon*, and *Haweis*.

These three writers give us nothing more than their opinion; and I have already observed, that the value of an opinion depends upon the strength of the evidence by which it is supported. *Mosheim* gives no proofs; he merely asserts. Assertions are easily made; but proofs are not so easily given. *Mosheim* too had the system of his own church to maintain. The prejudice and errors arising from this source, every thinking mind must be aware of. Many great men have adopted opinions utterly inconsistent with facts, and have maintained principles from which common sense revolts.

Gibbon is another of your authorities, if the *opinion* of a man can be called authority. I wonder, Sir, that it did not strike you, that a man who denied the divine origin of the scriptures, could not, with the least consistency, allow the divine origin of Episcopacy. To have done this, would have been to renounce infidelity. If the scriptures have not the stamp of divinity, certainly the ministry which was instituted to preserve and expound them, cannot claim any character of that sort.

Your next historian is Dr. *Harweis*. Did you quote him, Sir, on account of the weight he derives from his learning, or profound knowledge of antiquity, or consistency of character? Do you think that a man who despises learning, can be very learned himself, and who abuses all the Fathers of the church, can know much about them? Do you think that man's testimony is of much weight, who always takes part with heretics and schismatics, and commends *Novatians*, *Donatists*, *Meletians*, and *Luciferians*, while Catholic confessors and martyrs are treated with contempt, because they did not think as he does upon the subjects of *predestination* and *grace*? Can you think that man's opinion of any consequence, who says, that he "thinks Episcopacy most correspondent to the *Apostolic practice*, and the *general usage* of the church in the *first* and *generally esteemed purer ages*," and yet can unite with those who have departed from Apostolical practice, and are the avowed enemies of *primitive usage*? Can he be a proper guide to those who wish to be acquainted with the constitution of Christ's Church, who says, that "most of the Apostles *lived* and *died* among their brethren in *Palestine*; that "all ecclesiastical officers for the first three hundred years were elected by the people;" and that "*Matthias* was *thus* chosen to fill up the *tribular* number of the Apostles," as he expresses himself? Is that man a diligent and accurate historian, who talks of the *constitutions* of

Ignatius, meaning, no doubt, the *Apostolical Constitutions*, which were pretended to have been written by *Clement*; who calls *Polycarp* the disciple of *Ignatius*, when all the primitive writers assert that he was the disciple of *St. John*; who mistakes the name of an office for the name of a man, calling *Pontius*, the Deacon of *St. Cyprian*, *Pontius Diaconus*? Can, in short, that man, who is so *spiritually minded*, because he believes the doctrine of *election* and *reprobation*, be a sure guide to *primitive truth and order*, when he speaks contemptuously of the great lights of antiquity, the martyrs and confessors of the faith of *Jesus*; and when he rejects in a lump the testimony of the early writers of the Catholic Church? If such a man's opinion can be of any service to you, avail yourself of it, Sir; but we will be contented with the *ancient Fathers*, as *historians of the facts which were accessible to their inquiries*.*

: I will close this letter with recommending as a counterpoise to your three historians, the Ecclesiastical histories of *Eusebius*, *Sozomen*, and *Theodoret* among the ancients; *Echard's* and *Du Pin's* among the moderns; and, with them, *Bingham's Antiquities of the Christian Church*.

* See a *Review of Haweis' Church History*, annexed to *Skinner's Answer to Campbell's Lectures*, lately republished by T. & J. Swords.

LETTER XX.

REV. SIR,

I HAVE now considered, as briefly as I well could, your manner of obviating the difficulties attending the supposition of a change of government in the purest ages of the Christian church; and if I do not deceive myself, it has been demonstrated, that it was morally impossible, that such a change should have taken place before the *Roman* empire became Christian. The profound silence of all antiquity upon the subject; the impracticability of a change, considering the circumstances of the church in the first three ages; the absurdity of the supposition, considering the nature of the human mind, which cannot act without motives; the extreme difficulty of perceiving any motive that could have actuated the breasts of the usurpers; the inconsistency of such a supposition, with the positive testimony of the Fathers to the Apostolic origin of Episcopacy; the well known purity of the church in the second century, when this change is supposed to have taken place; all these accumulated considerations place Episcopacy upon high and impregnable ground. They afford what the great

Chillingworth does not scruple to call a demonstration of the Apostolic origin of Episcopacy. The demonstration stands thus—"Episcopal government is acknowledged to have been universally received in the church presently after the Apostles' times. Between the Apostles' times and that *presently after*, there was not time enough for, nor possibility of, so great an alteration.

"And, therefore, there was no such alteration as is pretended. And, therefore, Episcopacy being confessed to be so *ancient* and *Catholic*, must be granted to be also *Apostolic*."

In the preceding letter, I showed that Presbyterian writers are at variance, when they attempt to assign the century when Episcopacy first appeared in the church; and also observed, that this difference among themselves affords a strong presumption that they are all wrong. I would now observe, that as they cannot agree with respect to the *time*, so neither can they with respect to the *source* of this usurpation. The generality ascribe it to wicked ambition, rendered successful by general corruption. But the celebrated *Dr. Campbell* takes very different ground. He condemns those who ascribe the change to *corruption*; for that, he says, is ascribing it to what did not exist. The church, he assures us, was in great purity, and the clergy were distinguished for their virtue and piety in the second century; and you make the same acknowledgment. He ascribes the change not to *vice*, but to *virtue*;

not to *corruption*, but to *piety*. Well, Sir, where are we now? According to the learned *Principal*, virtue and piety changed Presbyterian into Episcopal government. Who then would not wish, that the offspring of so venerable a parent were suffered to exist in peace? And what an implied reflection upon Presbyterian parity, that the interests of religion required its abolition! But what sort of virtue and piety could that be, which led the Presbyters to offer to a few of their own order, Episcopal pre-eminence, and those to whom it was offered, to receive it; both parties well knowing that it was contrary to the will of Christ? And what were both parties to get by thus depraving the government of the church, and violating a sacred institution? They certainly could expect no reward in the *next* life for their transgression. And what did *this* life offer to the *Presbyters* for degrading themselves, and to the *Bishops* for receiving this unchristian boon? To the *former*, imagination can give no equivalent; as to the *latter*, did they derive from it wealth and secular advantages? No; poverty and contempt were their certain portion. Had they less suffering and greater security? No; but almost inevitable death, and every species of torture. It seems then that no motive can possibly be assigned, either on the ground of *virtue*, or of *corruption*, for this wonderful change.

The mode which the learned *Principal* adopted to account for this extraordinary revolution is, if

possible, worse than yours. It is ascribing to *piety*, what nothing but *monstrous depravity* could have suggested; it is ascribing to the human mind (as your hypothesis also does) *action* without *motive*, which is palpable nonsense; it is supposing the Bishops to be idiots, in accepting a superiority, from which no advantage could result, either in this world or in the next; and, lastly, it supposes (as the ground usually taken does) that all the subsequent writers and councils were grossly ignorant, or stupidly credulous, in regard to the Apostolic origin of Episcopacy.—Thus much for Dr. *Campbell's* speculation.

The *fact* being thus, I think, established, that *diocesan* Episcopacy was sanctioned by the Apostles, and that it was not the offspring of human ambition, as you unjustifiably assert, I have no need of taking notice of what you call “a sketch of the rise and progress of this remarkable usurpation.”* For all you have said from page 321 to page 329 is nothing more than what you had said in a more diffused manner throughout your book; to every article of which, a sufficient answer (I flatter myself) has been given.

Before I pass on to your concluding *letter*, I shall make a few observations on the testimonies you adduce from *Gregory Nazianzen*. You say, “That the synods and councils which early began

* Page 321 et sequent.

to be convened, were, *in fact*, thus employed by the ambitious clergy, to extend and confirm their power, might be proved by witnesses almost numberless. The testimony of one shall suffice." You then quote *Gregory* as saying, "that he was desirous of avoiding all synods, because he had never seen a good effect, or happy conclusion of any one of them; that they rather increased than lessened the evils they were designed to prevent; and that the love of contention, and the *lust of power*, were there manifested in instances innumerable." And afterwards speaking of the council of *Constantinople*, which met in 381, he remarks—"These conveyers of the Holy Ghost, these preachers of peace to all men, grew bitterly outrageous and clamorous against one another, in the midst of the church, mutually accusing each other, leaping about as if they had been mad, under the furious impulse of a lust of power and dominion, as if they would have rent the whole world in pieces. This was not the effect of piety, but of a *contention for thrones*." Again: "Would to God there were *no prelacy*, no pre-eminence of place, no tyrannical privileges; and that we might be distinguished by virtue alone. This right and left hand, and this middle place, these higher and lower dignities, and this state-like precedence, have caused many fruitless contests and bruises, have cast many into the pit, and carried away multitudes to the place of goats." Upon these quotations, you ask, "Would an eminently

learned and pious Bishop have spoken thus, if he had considered prelacy as of divine appointment?"

To this question I answer without hesitation—Yes, he might have thus spoken in perfect consistency with the belief that Episcopacy was of divine origin. Was there ever a more fallacious mode of reasoning than this? Bishops have abused their authority, therefore the office is not of divine appointment. Some councils have done more harm than good; therefore councils are pernicious. Whither will not this sophistry lead us? Certainly, Sir, farther than you desire. Many of your readers, no doubt, will stop precisely at the point at which you would wish them to stop; but others will "push you over the precipice" with the consequences of this fallacy. The Papists will tell you, that reading the Bible has produced heresies and schisms; therefore it cannot be the duty of the laity to read it. The Quaker will tell you, and with truth, that Presbyters, as well as Bishops, have been proud, and contentious, and ambitious; and, therefore, we are better without them. The Deists will tell you, that Christianity has occasioned seditions, rebellions, wars, massacres, and innumerable other mischiefs; and, therefore, it cannot be of divine institution. Whither will not this sophism lead us? It has deprived us of the Bible, of a ministry, and of religion altogether. It will also deprive us of civil government. Under every form much mischief has been done. Great injustice,

cruelty, and oppression of every kind, have been committed by rulers in all ages, and all nations; therefore, we are better without government. Language, says the misanthrope, is a great evil. It enables men to curse, and swear, and lie, and backbite; therefore they would do better without it. Food and drink are pernicious things, for thousands make beasts of themselves, and sink both body and soul into perdition. Whither will not this sophistry lead us?—But I am done; it is too apparent not to be perceived, too pernicious not to be rejected.

Permit me, Sir, seriously to ask you, what was your object in presenting to your readers these quotations from *Gregory*? Was it to disprove the divine origin of Episcopacy? That would be too absurd. Was it to show that he did not consider it as proceeding from that source? But what if he did not; it would not affect the evidence for it? It would amount to no more than *opinion*. I presume the object was, to prejudice your readers against Episcopacy. If you could make a Presbyterian of *Gregory*, as he lived near the close of the fourth century, it would be a shadow in your favour. So valuable are the *ancient Fathers*, if they can, by any means, be got to cast a favourable look upon ministerial parity! But how, Sir, have you discovered that *Gregory* did not believe Episcopacy to be of divine origin? Is it from his condemnation of the *abuse* of the office? You will hardly

answer this question in the affirmative. That would lead you into all the consequences of this species of sophism. Is it from the quotations you have given us? There is no assertion of that sort in them. Is it from his wishing that there were no dignities in the church—no higher places to contend about? That wish, when properly understood, is perfectly consistent with a belief of the divine origin of Episcopacy. The temporal prerogatives, great wealth, and high honours that were attached to the Episcopal office, were merely accidental circumstances, and in no respect whatever necessarily connected with the office. The powers of a Bishop, like those of a Presbyter, are altogether spiritual, and therefore presenting nothing to gratify ambition, or to foster pride. It is, when faithfully discharged, a laborious, painful, and highly responsible office. I cannot conceive what there is in such an office, to induce any man to aspire after it, when neither wealth, nor temporal honours are annexed to it. But it has been too much the misfortune of the church, to have her dignitaries overloaded with the distinctions of the world, which have a natural tendency to wean the mind from spiritual things.

In reading over that *abstract* of the works of *Gregory*, which *Du Pin* has given us, I cannot find a single expression that would induce one to think, that he did not believe the divine institution of Episcopacy. It rather affords a presumption that he did believe it, that he himself was a Bishop.

And in his seventeenth discourse about some differences that happened at *Nazianzum*, between the people and the governor, he tells him "that he should not take it ill, that he spoke to him with freedom; that *the law of God subjects him to the commandment of his Bishop.*"* Now, with what truth could *Gregory* say so, if he did not believe that the Episcopal office was of divine appointment? It is a necessary consequence of such a declaration.

But does not *Gregory* wish, that there were "no *prelacy*, no *pre-eminence* of place, no tyrannical privileges?" He does not wish that there were no *Bishops*, but no *pre-eminence* among *Bishops*—no *tyrannical* privileges among that *order* of the ministry; but that they were all as Christ left them, perfectly equal. This, Sir, is very sound doctrine, and perfectly consistent with high church principles. Even the *Metropolitcal* presidency, as it stood before the empire became Christian, is not at all inconsistent with this wish of *Gregory's*. A well regulated presidency, not confined to the *Bishops* of the *Metropoles*, but falling where it ought, upon men of the greatest virtue and talents, is liable to no reasonable objection. Unfortunately, this moderation was not observed after the empire became Christian, but some undue privileges were conferred by the civil power upon the *Bishops* of the great cities. It is

* Du Pin's Ecc. Hist. vol. i. p. 166.

against this *pre-eminence of place*, against these *tyrannical privileges* that *Gregory* exclaims. But you, very unwarrantably, endeavour to make your readers believe, that he wished there was no Episcopal superiority in the church; and, to give it that air, you translate the Greek word $\alpha\rho\iota\epsilon\delta\rho\iota\alpha$,* *prelacy*, when it would be more correct to translate it *chief seat*, or *prerogative of place*—that is, *chief seat* among Bishops, whom he wished to see in a state of equality; since pre-eminence of place had been attended with so much contention. This is the true sense of the quotations you have given us from *Gregory*.

In order to determine, how far the censures passed by *Gregory* upon some of the Bishops of his age are well founded, it is necessary to know the state of the church when he wrote, what were the particular provocations he received, and what were his temper and disposition. Without the knowledge of these circumstances, it is impossible to form a correct judgment upon this point.

With respect to the state of the church, it is certain that she had declined considerably from her primitive purity and simplicity. This declension was not confined to a particular order. *Gregory* pours forth his censures upon the Presbyters and people also. Here your question may be retorted. "Would an eminently learned and pious Bishop have spoken thus [of Presbyters] if he had con-

* See *Bilson. Pepet. Govt. &c.* p. 599.

sidered their office, as of divine appointment?" But notwithstanding this much to be lamented decay of piety, there were many excellent Bishops and Priests, and a great number of virtuous and religious people. But while there were *any* of a contrary character, *Gregory's* virtuous mind would be sensibly wounded; and, in consequence, be powerfully impelled to make the thunder of his eloquence heard far and wide. A man of his rigid and austere disposition, and lively, ungovernable fancy, would naturally be led into unqualified and excessive strains of lamentation and censure. We ought, therefore, to make great abatements from his high strain of invective, and set down a good deal to the severity of the man. One who could so highly panegyricize monkery, does not appear to me to be very well qualified to make a cool and dispassionate estimate of the manners of the age. Add to all this, the particular provocations which he had received, and then we shall be able to determine pretty accurately, how far we may safely admit his censures.

Gregory was ordained Priest by his father, and Bishop of *Sasima* by *Basil*, Bishop of *Cæsarea*. He was afterwards Bishop of *Constantinople*. In that *See*, he met with much opposition from the *Arians*, who were so numerous, and influential, as to excite an uproar against him. The *Arian* Bishops and clergy were at the bottom of this outcry. "Being very eloquent (says *Du Pin*) he converted, in a little

time, a great number of *Arians*, and increased the Catholics. He continued in the government of that church for some time; till an unhappy difference arose between him and the Eastern Bishops about the ordination of *Flavianus*, in the room of *Meletius*, Bishop of *Antioch*. The opposition he met with in that affair, induced him to resign his Bishopric. He left *Constantinople* with great regret, and ever afterwards spoke with indignation of those Bishops, who had forced him away from his *See*.

To these considerations add the temper of the man. According to *Du Pin*, he was of a severe and morose disposition. Fond of retirement, and the tranquillity of the *ascetic* life, he viewed all the affairs of this world with too much of the temper of the misanthrope. Soured by disappointments, and provoked by what he deemed injuries, he gave way too much to lacerated feelings, and, in consequence, poured forth all the bitterness of invective. The Eastern Bishops in particular, he considered as his enemies; and from a want of cool and dispassionate discrimination, he confounded the innocent with the guilty. All this, considering the weakness of human nature, is not much to be wondered at. Man ever has been, and ever will be governed more by *feeling* than by *reason*; and perhaps history cannot furnish an instance better calculated to prove the correctness of this assertion, than that which the life and character of *Gregory* afford.

It does not require any great knowledge of the philosophy of the human mind, to determine in what light this celebrated Bishop's censures are to be viewed. The general decline of primitive piety afforded him some ground for dissatisfaction, and the injuries which he had received greatly increased his discontent. But still, truth and justice required that he should have charged the injuries (if they were really such) to those who were guilty of them, and not have involved all the Bishops of his time in one indiscriminate censure. Notwithstanding, however, this comprehensive and undistinguishing strain of invective, *Gregory* takes care not to condemn the *order* itself. *That*, beyond all doubt, he believed to be of divine appointment.

I should not have dwelt so long upon this point, could I have supposed that all who read your *letters* are *reasoners*. When the mind is prejudiced against any particular profession, or order of men, the faults of that profession or order are laid hold of with avidity. The nature and utility of the order are never viewed with a philosophic eye; never placed in the scale of fair estimation. Some of that order have been degenerate; therefore the order itself is useless. This, with prejudiced and superficial reasoners, is generally the conclusion.

It does not a little astonish me, that a man of your good sense, of your amiable disposition, and of your universally acknowledged discretion, should

have gone into a mode of discussion, so repugnant to every rule of right reasoning, and to every dictate of sound prudence. That you should not see the fallacy of arguing against the *use* of a thing, from the *abuse* of it, is not to be supposed; and that you should not perceive, that this mode of reasoning would, if admitted, totally destroy the ministry of the church, is scarcely possible to be conceived. This presents to my mind a difficulty of no easy solution. I have no other way of freeing myself from this embarrassment, but by supposing that your strong prejudice got the better of your good sense.

A few more remarks upon three or four passages in your eighth letter will be sufficient. At p. 333, you say, "In this *gradual* change, which was more than *three centuries* in accomplishing, no reasonable man could expect to find the limits of the several steps precisely defined; because each step was slowly, and almost insensibly taken; and more especially, because the practice of all the churches was not *uniform*. There was no *particular time* when the transition from a state of *perfect parity*, to a fixed and acknowledged *superiority of order*, took place *at once*, and, therefore, no such time can be assigned."

In these assertions you flatly contradict *St. Jerome*, who says, *that the change took place in consequence of a decree throughout the world, for the purpose of checking schism*. Will you adhere to him only when he is obscure, and aban-

don him when he is clear and intelligible? He lived but two centuries after the supposed change, and must, therefore, in reason be supposed to have known more about the matter than you can possibly know. Yet he does not say a syllable about a change *after* the death of the Apostles. If you have given us a true account of the "rise and progress of Episcopacy," you must have derived it from the writings of the *ancients*; but he had all those writings which you have, and many more; and yet he has given us an account of the matter very different from your's. What now shall we say? Which is right, you, or this man of "great research?"

2. You not only contradict *Jerome*, but the ablest Presbyterians that have ever written upon the subject—*Blondel*, *Salmasius*, *Chamier*, and a number of others. They place the change in the second century, and some of them acknowledge, that there was a moderate prelacy established by the Apostles themselves. But it seems all their diligence, learning, and knowledge of antiquity, only led them astray. But you have been able, by the help of *Boyse*, *Campbell*, *Clarkson*, and a few others, to give us a better account of the matter. It is, to be sure, possible, that you have turned over more pages of the Fathers than *Blondel* and *Salmasius*; but if I may judge from your seldom giving us any references, I should not be very positive that you have.

3. You directly contradict all antiquity. I have, in the course of this discussion, produced so many

direct, positive, decisive assertions of the ancients, in favour of the Apostolical institution of Episcopacy, that it seems to me impossible, by any means whatever, to evade their force. Notwithstanding this accumulated evidence, which you must have seen in Episcopal writers, you give your readers a fanciful “ sketch of the rise and progress of Episcopacy;” and assert every thing with as much positiveness, as if you had produced authorities in abundance. Really, Sir, at this rate, facts have changed their nature, and are altogether the creations of fancy.

Another particular which I shall notice, is your assertion, that, “ in some churches there were *several* Bishops at the same time ; in others but *one*.” I have already shown that it was a Catholic maxim, “ *One Bishop in a city*,” let the Presbyters be ever so numerous. Indeed, when a Bishop was aged, a coadjutor was appointed; or when there was a powerful schism, as in the case of the *Donatists*, in order to effect a reconciliation, the Bishops of the schismatics were allowed to act in conjunction with the Catholic Bishops; and this was the circumstance that multiplied Bishops so much in *Africa*; but never were there any churches that had *several* Bishops at the same time, as you assert, not only *without* authority, but in *opposition* to all the authorities of antiquity.

You repeat, at the close of this letter, the idle tale of *St. Patrick's* establishing Presbyterianism in *Ire-*

land. This fiction, I flatter myself, has been sufficiently exposed. That the Pope of *Rome* should direct his missionary to plant Presbytery among the converts to Christianity in that island, is so monstrously absurd, that I wonder a man of sense can utter any thing of the kind. But the mind of man is a strange thing. It can see clearly enough when the object corresponds with its inclination; but when otherwise, a distinct perception, and a rational decision are not to be expected.

I have now, Sir, answered every thing of consequence, not only in this, but in every preceding letter; and that the precise point of dispute may be left clearly and strongly on the minds of our readers, I will, in a few words, again present it to their view.

The question between us is, what is the constitution of the Christian church? To prove it Episcopal, I have quoted several passages from the New Testament; and, to show that our interpretation of these passages is correct, I have produced numerous testimonies from the primitive writers. This is the only possible way of deciding a question of fact. There has not been a single testimony produced by you that says, Episcopacy was *not* the government of the church in the Apostolic age; but I have produced a number of testimonies which directly say, that Episcopacy is a divine institution, and a still greater number which necessarily imply it. The comparatively few passages which you

have produced from the Fathers, are expressed in such vague and indefinite language, that unless we interpret them by what is clear and decisive, (as common sense says we ought) we must remain in the dark as to the meaning. By having recourse to this rule, we make *St. Jerome* consistent with himself; and what is of infinitely more consequence, we make the testimony of the Scriptures and of the Fathers perfectly consistent. If we abandon this rule, and adopt your hypothesis, we immediately set them at variance, and present a difficulty to the mind incapable of rational solution.

I have also shown, from the nature of the human mind, which cannot act without a motive, and from the universally acknowledged circumstances of the church in the second century, that a change which deprived the Presbyters of their rights, could not have taken place. And, antecedently to this supposed change, I have shown that the venerable *Ignatius*, whose writings have been completely proved to be genuine and authentic, by *Pearson* and *Hammond*, and allowed to be so by the great body of the learned, declares over and over again, that Episcopacy is of divine institution. This testimony is of immense weight, and can never be diminished by any efforts of genius, by any subtleties of sophistry, or by any plausibility of theory.

It has also been shown, that no church, after the most severe investigation, can be produced, in which Episcopal government did not prevail, till

the sixteenth century. The *Armenian* and *Persian* churches in the East, those of *Spain* in the West, of *Africa* in the South, and of *Great-Britain* in the North, submitted to Episcopal regimen, without a single exception. And the proof we have for all this, is the universal testimony of those writers, upon whose authority we admit the *canon* of scripture.

Here then I would ask a conscientious Presbyterian, whether he can in his heart believe, that the primitive Saints and Martyrs would be so profligate as to usurp the Episcopal pre-eminence in defiance of the institution of the Apostles? Whether they would attempt this, not only without any worldly motive, but with a certainty of greater loads of care and affliction, and with the strongest probability of a terrible death? I would ask him, whether men would attempt to usurp a little spiritual authority with such expectations, and upon such principles? And if it were possible to conceive it, whether they *could* prevail in so short time over the widely diffused church of Christ; and that too without opposition, or one word of complaint from the degraded Presbyters? But admitting these unreasonable suppositions, I would ask a conscientious Presbyterian, whether he ought to consider the *supposition* of a fact, as equivalent to the *proof* of it? The fact still remains to be *proved*, although we admit the *possibility* of it.

I conclude, therefore, in the words of Mr. Reeves,

thât “ Bishop, Presbyter, and Deacon, were the three orders of the church from the beginning of the days of *John Calvin*, who, though a wise and learned man, showed his frailty first, by thrusting himself into the sacred function without being lawfully called; and, secondly, by drawing up, out of his own head, a new scheme of Ecclesiastical polity, wherein he excludes the Episcopal order, and lodges the whole power of the church in a minister with lay-elders; and taking advantage of the fondness and necessity of the people, and the absence of the Bishop, made them swear as absolutely to his new scheme, as if every tittle of it had been dictated from *Mount Sinai*; although, by his own confession, but *intimated* in scripture, and this *intimation* never thought of by any of the ancients, nor any strictures of such a form entertained in any church upon earth before his own time. This novel regimen found its way into the *French* and *Dutch* reformed churches, and after some time into the church of *Scotland*; but the church of England kept close to the *primitive* government, concluding that we might as well reform ourselves out of the inferior orders of Presbyter and Deacon, as that of Bishop. And that if any one of these Apostolic institutions may be nulled by human authority, so might the rest, and so we might come to have a new form of church government every moon, or, if that seem best, none at all. And, therefore, (says

he) though I have all imaginable good will and charity for the *foreign* churches, who, under their hands, have testified their readiness to conform with us, were they in our place, and plead *necessity* for their difference, yet being no judge, I shall not take upon me to determine how far this plea now will justify or excuse them. But this plea of theirs can never reach our *home dissenters*, who have nothing to object against the moderation of our present Bishops (as *Calvin* had against those of *Rome*) but only that they are Bishops. And, therefore, I cannot think it is either reasonable or lawful, to write ourselves out of an Apostolical institution, confirmed by the concurring sense and practice of all the Fathers, by a prescription of fifteen hundred years standing, and by the judgment of our own Reformers and Martyrs. I can never think ourselves, I say, obliged in charity to write ourselves out of this complicated authority, into a compliance with such consciences as make such Bishops one article for schism, which their pretended patron *St. Jerome* makes decreed by the Apostles for the extirpation of the seeds of schism all the world over.”*

The way is now open for me to make a few remarks upon your concluding letter.

Your first observation is, that “the *practical influence* of any doctrine, has been generally con-

* Preface concerning the right use of the *Fathers*.

sidered as a good test of its *truth*. *By their fruits ye shall know them*, is a rule which applies to principles as well as to men. Let us apply this rule to the case before us. If Prelacy be of exclusive and unalterable divine right; if it be so essential, that there is no true church, no authorized ministry, no valid ordinances without it; if Episcopal churches *alone* are in covenant with Christ, in the appointed road to heaven, and warranted to hope in the promises of God; then we may reasonably expect and demand that all churches of this denomination should display more of the spirit of Christ than any other classes of professing Christians. But is this in fact the case? Will the friends of Prelacy undertake to show, that they *alone* give this evidence that they belong to Christ? Will they even undertake to show, that Episcopalians exhibit in a *pre-eminent degree*, this practical testimony, that they are the *chosen generation*, the *peculiar people*, who are purified by the blood, and quickened by the spirit of the Redeemer?"

To this I answer, first; That the highest Episcopalians can claim no more than a divine right for Episcopacy. Precisely the same right do Presbyterians claim for Presbytery. "No ministry, no church," is a maxim with the Westminster divines. Now, the people called Quakers have no ministry. They may then ask you in nearly your own words; If Presbytery be of divine right; if it be so essential, that there is no true church without it; if

those churches only are in covenant with Christ which have a ministry; then Presbyterians should display more of the spirit of Christ than we do. But is this in fact the case? Are they more pious, more peaceable, more humble, and less conformed to the world than we are?" What, Sir, will you say to this? Will you say, yes? I doubt it.

I am entirely at a loss to conjecture how you will solve this difficulty. If you say, we do not pretend to have more piety and virtue than the people called Quakers; then the question will be, What is the advantage of your having a ministry of divine institution? "The blessing of God is, beyond all question, most likely to attend those institutions which are most agreeable to his will;" and yet here is a body of Christians, who want an essential part of a Christian church, who are as pious and virtuous as those who have it. How, Sir, do you solve the difficulty? Will you boldly cut the knot, and say, the Quakers are hypocrites; their virtue and piety are but in appearance? You will not venture to talk in this manner; for, to say nothing of the uncharitableness of it, you will be asked, How do you know that they are hypocrites? We can only judge from the life and conversation; and they appear in these respects full as correct as Presbyterians. How then do you obviate the difficulty?—Oh! I perceive your manner of extricating yourself.

You say (page 344) "It does not affect the solidity of this argument, that some churches which

Presbyterians consider as not *regularly* organized, upon *scriptural* principles, nevertheless embrace in their bosom a large portion of unaffected piety. If we undertook to maintain that the Presbyterian church is the only real church on earth, and alone in covenant with Christ the head, such a fact would, indeed, present a difficulty of no easy solution."

And do you really think, that this solves the difficulty? Either you admit that the Quakers belong to the visible church, or you do not. If the former, then there may be a church without sacraments and a ministry; and if so, you contradict the *Westminster* divines, your ablest and best writers, and what is worse, the holy scriptures. In the latter, none are considered as members of Christ's mystical *body* who are not baptized into the visible church. If you do not consider the Quakers as belonging to the visible church, then the difficulty remains in full force against you. You are precisely in the same situation with respect to that people, that we are with respect to you; even upon the supposition that we do not allow Presbyterians to be members of the *visible* church. What right then have you to find fault with Episcopalians, when you set up a claim, which excludes the Quakers from being members of Christ's visible church? Do to them as you would have us do to you, and then all will be fair and equal.

This is reasoning the matter with you, even upon the highest claims of Episcopacy. If you can solve

the difficulty which you propose, as it respects the *Quakers*, we can adopt your mode, to solve the difficulty as it respects *you*. Make the experiment, Sir, and I will engage to follow your track ; provided you do not give up the principle, that a ministry is essential to a Christian church.

I think I might safely let the matter rest upon this ground. But as I wish to have this point clearly and fully understood, I will give the real state of the case in a few words. There are two principal divisions of Episcopalians. One division believe that Episcopacy is of divine right, in that strict sense, that there can be no *valid* administrations without it. At the same time, they do not entertain the most distant thought, that the want of it will preclude men from salvation, when it proceeds from necessity, or from honest error. They believe that such error will be forgiven, and sincere piety accepted in all who profess the faith of Christ. No charity can be more extensive than this ; and whatever may be thought of the correctness of the principle, no fault can be found with the temper of the mind. They think, that if Episcopacy be a divine institution, and there can be no church without a ministry, the inevitable consequence is, that Episcopacy is essential to the visible church. And as to the difficulty which you propose, they do not view it as any difficulty at all ; for they say, when the heart is right, that grace which is not promised to unauthorized administrations, is granted

by special favour ; so that none will fail of salvation when the error is not wilful, or when necessity excludes men from Episcopal administrations. Now, whatever may be thought of this reasoning, it appears to me to be the only way in which you can reconcile your own principle, "no ministry, no true church," with charity, and rational views of the goodness and mercy of God.

The other class of Episcopalians, although they believe Episcopacy to have been instituted by the Apostles, under the guidance of the Holy Ghost, yet do not consider it as essential to the *being* of a church. Presbyterian churches they consider as *very defective*; but not deprived of their church character; as *excuseable*, when Episcopacy cannot be had; but *schismatical*, when it can; as *irregular* and *unscriptural* in their ministry, but, by no means, devoid of a *valid* ministry. This class of Episcopalians have nothing to do with your supposed difficulty. As they do not unchurch dissenters from Episcopacy, although they think them *blameable*, and in most cases *schismatical*; as they do not place them under *uncovenanted* mercy, they have the same channels of grace open to them that Episcopalians have, and, consequently, may be as good, or better than they, if they are placed in a more favourable situation. It is then only the first class of Episcopalians that are affected by what you deem a difficulty of no easy solution. But whether it be a difficulty or not, you should remember, that the

Westminster divines and yourself are as much affected by it, in reference to the Quakers and other mystic Christians, as the first class of Episcopalians are with respect to Presbyterians. If you will, therefore, extricate yourself, and they like your mode of doing it better than their own, no doubt they will adopt it; but until you do, depend upon it, they will not think it very modest in you to call upon them to solve a difficulty, in which you are as deeply involved as they are. These arguments are partly *ad hominem*, and partly *ad verecundiam*.

The first class of Episcopalians, whatever may be said for the correctness of their principles, are, at least, very consistent. They set out precisely on the same ground with the *Westminster* divines—“no ministry, no true church.” If, then, Episcopacy be a divine institution, and none but Bishops can communicate the sacerdotal character, it follows inevitably, that there can be no ministry without them, and, consequently, without them no true church. This is the mode of reasoning of this class of churchmen; and perhaps it is not so easy to answer it, as those must suppose, who reject the principle upon which it is founded. Be that as it may, it is exactly the reasoning of the *Westminster* divines, and of yourself, Sir. You say,* “It is only as far as *any* succession flows through the line of Presbyters, that it is either regular or valid. It is the *laying*

* Page 347.

on of the hands of the Presbytery that constitutes a scriptural ordination." Consequently, without the imposition of the hands of Presbyters, there can be no ministry; and without a ministry, there can be no true church. And none but those who belong to the *visible* church are entitled to *covenant* privileges. Therefore, the Quakers and some others, who have no ministry ordained by *laying on of the hands of the Presbytery*, are completely unchurched. I cannot conceive, Sir, how it is possible for you to evade this consequence; and if you cannot, how strange is it for you to propose a difficulty, which, if it be really such, bears with all its force upon you, as much as upon those Episcopalians who unchurch Presbyterians. But the other class of Episcopalians (as has been already observed) stand entirely clear of this difficulty, because their principles have nothing *exclusive* in them, at least in their view of the matter, and, consequently, they place Episcopal regimen on a more liberal footing than you do Presbyterian; for they exclude nobody from visible church membership, but you exclude Quakers and all those who have not a ministry ordained by the imposition of the hands of the Presbytery. And as you assert, that nineteen Episcopalians out of twenty, are of the second class, then it follows upon your own concession, that in that proportion, churchmen are more liberal than genuine, consistent Presbyterians. Well, Sir, be it so, I have no objection.

Without attempting to determine which of the two classes of Episcopalians is right, that which totally unchurches all denominations which have not Bishops, or that which, while they maintain the Apostolic institution of Episcopacy, do, nevertheless, in certain cases, admit the *validity* of Presbyterian ordination, but in no case its *regularity*, I shall but just observe, that even on the first and highest ground, you cannot, with the least consistency, or modesty, make any objection. If they make Episcopacy essential to the *being* of a church, so do you a ministry ordained by the hands of the Presbytery. If they are at a loss to solve the difficulty, how it is that God confers his grace as freely upon those who are not members of the visible church, as upon those who are, you are equally at a loss. But if you can solve this difficulty, so can they in the very same manner. How then is it, Sir, that you could have so lost sight of consistency and propriety, as to have indulged yourself in such language as you have, towards those, as they are commonly styled, high-flying churchmen? You place their principles upon a level with the worship of images, and exhort your people to exercise patience towards those deluded bigots; not considering that you were at the same time involving yourself in the same condemnation. The Quaker, Sir, can treat you in the same complimentary manner with at least as much propriety, and as good a grace, as you treat Episcopalians.

I sincerely wish, Sir, that a number of expressions in your letters had been forborne. They favour too much of bitterness, and of that bigotry of which you complain in others.

But, Sir, after all, what is this mighty difficulty, which is to deter Episcopalians from asserting that there cannot be such a church as Christ constituted without Episcopal authority? Do those Episcopalians thereby exclude Presbyterians from salvation? Far, very far from it. They declare most readily, and delight in the thought, that their piety will be accepted. Surely, Sir, you know this. How then could you say, that "such persons are to be viewed in the same light with those who *conscientiously* believe—that there is no salvation out of the pale of the church of *Rome*?" Are those who extend salvation to all denominations of Christians, and even to the very heathen, to be abused as bigots, and ranked with those who confine it to a particular pale? Is such *extensive* charity to be put upon a footing with such *contracted* bigotry? Are those who ascribe sincerity to the piety of others, and purity to their motives, to be ranked with those who admit no purity, and, of consequence, no salvation out of their own church? Surely, Sir, you could not have been under the influence of the usual benevolent pulse of your heart, when you gave way to such feelings, nor of the usual dictates of your good sense, when you uttered such expressions. But you must be excused, as

you had a difficult task on hand; for certainly it is difficult to give plausibility to error, and to truth the appearance of falshood.

However difficult you may think it is to account for the Almighty's extending his grace to those who are in fundamental error, yet as the fact is certain that he does extend it, we ought not to be too curious in our inquiries into his conduct. *The Judge of all the earth will do right.* He has given his church such a constitution as he saw fit, and it is our duty to conform to it. If we err, and our error be not wilful, he will make due allowances for our honest misconception; but we have no right to call that a Christian church which is materially different from the one he has constituted by his Holy Spirit. Still he *may* and *does* extend his grace and mercy to such Christians. *We* are bound, but *his* grace is free. This is the language of the first class of Episcopalians.

I fear that I have been too prolix upon this point; but I believe it was necessary to show how inconsistent you are in this part of the discussion, and how unreasonable in expecting from Episcopalians a sacrifice of what they deem truth, because the consequences bear hard upon others. If they are correct in their views of the Christian church, the consequences, whatever they may be, are not of their making. Let those look to that who have deviated from a divine institution.

Thus, then, I think it appears, that those who

carry Episcopacy so far as to pronounce your ministry invalid, and, in consequence, your church fundamentally deficient in her regimen, carry the matter no further with you, than you do with the Quakers; and, therefore, you cannot, with any consistency, find fault with them. And as to any difficulty that you may think attends the carrying of *Episcopacy* to such a length, the very same difficulty attends the divine right of *Presbytery*, when carried into all its consequences. You must, therefore, either give up this mode of assailing Episcopacy, or you must change your principles. Consistency requires that you should do one or the other. I now proceed to consider a few more passages in your concluding letter.

You say, "The efficacy of Episcopal government in securing the unity of the church, in guarding against schism, and in promoting harmony and peace, has been much celebrated. But is there such a peculiar and benign efficacy in that form of Ecclesiastical order? I am willing to refer the decision of this question to any man who is acquainted with Ecclesiastical history? If we consult *Eusebius*, he will present us with a picture of the violence, the strife, and the divisions among Bishops, and among different portions of the church, through their means, which is enough to make a Christian weep. If we consult *Gregory Nazianzen*, he will tell us, in language before quoted, that Prelacy 'has caused many fruitless conflicts and bruises,' &c. If

we examine the history of any Episcopal church on earth, we shall find it exhibiting, to say the least, as large a share of heresy, contention, and schism, as any which bears the Presbyterian form; and what is more, we shall ever find the Prelates themselves quite as forward as any others in scenes of violence and outrage.*

All this, Sir, is free enough to be sure; and rather out of the common way of proceeding. When men are charged with violence, and a contentious spirit, and when it is said, either expressly, or by implication, that the office they bear has a tendency to cherish that spirit, every reasonable man would expect such proofs as would justify these bold assertions. But you give us none at all; not so much as a single passage from any of the ancient historians. You indeed say, that you are willing to have the matter tried by Ecclesiastical history; but as you adduce no instances of the violence you talk so much about, it is hard to be obliged to look over many folio volumes in Greek and Latin, to pick up against ourselves, instances of misbehaviour in Bishops. I hope, Sir, you do not expect this. Well then, If such a demand would be highly unreasonable, I will take another method, and give you a sufficient number of instances of heresies, schisms, and contentions by Presbyters and Deacons, when Bishops had no other concern with them, than that

* Page 337, 338.

of making a faithful and zealous opposition to them. And upon this subject, very fortunately, I shall have no trouble; for I find it all done to my hand in a sufficient degree by Dr. *Maurice*, in his masterly answer to *Baxter*. I shall select from the Doctor's "Vindication of the primitive Church," several instances, which, if they will not make you "weep," will at least make you sorry—that *Bishops were not the authors of them*. And if this will not defeat you in this mode of attack, I will freely acknowledge my error; and, as a penance for it, I will enjoin upon myself to read your book over again.

First, then: All Ecclesiastical writers agree, that *Simon Magus* was the author of the first heresy in the Christian church. You will not say, I presume, that *Simon* was a Bishop. He wished indeed to be invested with that character, and for that purpose offered a sum of money to the Apostles. But they were too honest to be bribed by his offer. "Thy money perish with thee," was their reply.

The next heretic we read of was *Menander*;* but no mortal ever asserted that he was a Bishop.

Saturninus and *Basilides* are the next in order. But neither of them was a Bishop, nor of any other order in the church that we know of.†

Next in the list is the heresy of the *Nocalaitans*. This is generally ascribed to *Nicolas* the Deacon. So say *Ireneus* and *Epiphanius*.‡ This, however,

* Epiph. Her. 22. † Iren. lib. i. chap. 22, 23. ‡ Her. 25.

is disputed. Be it as it may, he certainly was no Bishop.

The *Gnostics* also had no Bishop for their founder and promoter. *Carpocrates* was a leading man among them; but he was never invested with Apostolical Episcopacy.*

Cerinthus, *Ebion*, *Valentinus*, *Secundus*, *Epiphanes*, *Isidorus*, *Ptolemæus*, and *Marcus*, were no Bishops; nor were *Colarbasus*, *Heracleon*, and *Cerdo*.

The thirty-ninth Christian sect in *Epiphanius* is that of the *Cathari*, or *Puritans*. *Novatus*, an African Presbyter, was the author of this sect; and he seduced *Novatianus*, a Roman Presbyter, to join with him against his Bishop.†

Theodotus, or *Theodotion*, was a learned man, and orthodox at first; and so was *Bardesanus Syrus*; but neither of them was a Bishop.

Montanus became the author of an impious heresy, because he could not obtain the Episcopal character. He blasphemously declared that he was the Holy Ghost.‡

The first heretical Bishop that we meet with in Ecclesiastical history, is *Paulus Samosatenus*, who succeeded *Demetrianus* in the See of *Antioch*, in the year 262, and who fell into heresy in the year 267. Here is a long space of time, more than two hundred years, and not one Bishop can be

* Clem. Alex. lib. vi.

† Epiph. Aux. Philast.

‡ Euseb. in Chron.

produced who was the author of any heresy. But in that time, we find a few Presbyters, one Deacon, and several laymen, who were authors of heresies.

This *Paulus* was a bad man as to his morals, and very heterodox as to his faith. He taught that Christ was not God.* But he was not the first that taught this doctrine. *Artemas* and *Theodotus* taught it before him.† Now, Sir, be careful to put *Paulus* upon your list of heretical Bishops; but, at the same time remember, that he was deposed by a council of Bishops. *Theodotus* too, who was a Presbyter, was not suffered to remain in the Catholic church. He was excommunicated by *Victor*, Bishop of *Rome*.

We have now, Sir, enumerated the principal heresies, which sprang up in the Christian church, for the first three hundred years, and in all that time, we find, among many thousand Bishops, but one heretic. This is really very wonderful. If any man wished to ascertain the state of Christian doctrine during that period, what better proof could he have of its purity, than this remarkable coincidence of principle among the Governors of the church? There is nothing like this to be produced in modern times, of which some people talk in such high strains of panegyric. Now, from a general prevalence of purity of doctrine, we may very reasonably infer purity of morals;

* Euseb. lib. vii. chap. 30. † Epiph. &c.

otherwise, what advantage has truth over error? Add to this the dreadful persecution of Christians during this period, and we may safely pronounce, without inquiring into the fact, that the three first centuries were the golden period of the church. What then shall we say to your picture of it? I do not hesitate to say, that it is a perfect caricature.

The following ages, it must be acknowledged, were not so pure. The early part of the fourth century was very afflictive to the church, in consequence of heresy and schism, which always destroy its peace. *Meletius*, an Egyptian Bishop, the first of that order who began a schism, forsook the communion of the church, because, according to *Epiphanius*, those who fell from the faith under persecution, were received into it. But *Athanasius* tells the story differently. He says, that this Bishop had himself denied the faith, and being condemned by a Synod of Bishops, he became a schismatic.

About the same time sprang up the *Donatists*, who, if *Optatus* be right, owed their origin to two Presbyters, *Botrus* and *Celeusius*; although they were named from *Donatus*, one of their Bishops, who lived a good while after the rise of that faction.*

But the sect that most afflicted the church in the fourth century, was that of the *Arians*; so called from *Arius*, who, by good providence, was no

* Aug. Heref.

more than a Presbyter. He taught that Christ was not of the same substance with the Father, and that he was not eternal. This doctrine first divided the church of *Alexandria*, and then all the world; a few Bishops adopting his notion, but by far the greater part opposing it. At length a general council was called, by which *Arius* was condemned; and out of nearly three hundred Bishops, but seventeen took his part, and but five of them refused to sign the decrees of the council.*

Constantius succeeded his father in the *East*, and being a friend to the *Arians*, that heresy gained ground to a great degree. The Bishops, who were generally opposed to it, were deposed and banished, and the *Sees* filled with *Arians*. It was in this state of things that so much contention arose among the Bishops of the church. The *Arian* Bishops, supported by the Emperor, persecuted the orthodox Bishops; while these, as was their duty, strenuously opposed their heretical adversaries. Hence arose that confusion and violence, which *Gregory Nazianzen* speaks of as existing in the councils of that age. Not *Prelacy*, as you would have your readers believe, but *heresy*, was the principal cause of it; and if the Bishops could have had their wish, or if their efforts had been successful, the church would not have experienced the miseries which resulted from that pestilent sect.

* Socr. lib. i. cap. 6. and Soz. lib. i. cap. 21.

The sects that sprang out of *Arianism* were, most of them, begun by those that were not Bishops. *Ætius* was no more than a Deacon.* *Eunomius* and *Macedonius* were heresiarchs long before they were Bishops. The prevalence of *Arianism*, under an *Arian* Emperor, placed them in Episcopal chairs.†

Another improver of *Arianism*, and leader of a new sect, was *Aërius*. He was no Bishop. His fellow student, *Eustathius*, being raised to that office in preference to him, the disappointment rankled in his breast, and he began to disparage that Apostolic order. "He was," says Dr. *Maurice*, "the *Cartwright* of those times, and the father of the Presbyterian parity. A notion brought into the world by the ambitious discontent of one, who, when he could not be a Bishop himself, yet scorned to seem inferior to any Bishop."

The *Audians* were a sect which sprang up about the same time with the *Arians*, headed by one *Audius*, an *Anthropomorphite*; but he was no Bishop, till he had made a schism, and then he was made a Bishop by his own party.‡

The *Priscillianists*, who were a mixture of *Manichees* and *Gnostics*, sprang up in the *West*; but their author was not a Bishop. *Marcus* is supposed to have been the founder of it; but it does not appear that he had any clerical character. *Priscillian*,

* Soz. lib. iii. 18. Soc. lib. ii.

‡ Epiph. Heres. 71.

† Soc. lib. iv. cap. 7. Athan. Apol. 2.

his scholar, gave name to the sect; but he was no more than a layman, when he was condemned by the council of *Saragossa*.*

The *Pelagian* heresy had no Bishop, either for its author or promoter. *Pelagius*, who gave it being, was a monk; and *Julianus* and *Celestius*, his disciples, were never Bishops.†

Eutyches was no Bishop, but a monk. This heresy prevailed chiefly among the *Eastern* monks; who made great disturbances about it after the council of *Chalcedon*.

The heresy of the *Monothelites* was an unavoidable consequence of the doctrine of *Eutyches*. This heresy is fathered upon *Cyrus*, Bishop of *Alexandria*, who seduced two other Bishops into his opinion. But this departure from Catholic doctrine made no great progress, having met with great opposition from the Episcopal college. These were the principal heresies of the first five or six centuries; and we see that no blame can be attached to the Bishops; but, on the contrary, that they are deserving of the highest commendation.

“But now,” says *Dr. Maurice*, “because the devil had another game to play, and started up but few heresies until those last ages; let us see what sort of men the authors of them have been. The *Swelkfeldians*, *Anabaptists*, *Memnonists*, the *Family of Love*, *Quakers*, *Ranters*, and the rest of the

* Sev. lib. ii. in fin.

† Aug. Her. 88.

modern sects ; did these derive themselves from any Bishops ? *Servetus*, was he a Bishop, or *Sociinus* ? Or were the *Racovian* divines a Council of Bishops ?”* Were *Luther* and *Carolastadius* Bishops ? It is well known they were not. Yet they could quarrel, and disgrace the Reformation by their incessant jarring. The latter was at last banished by the *Elector of Saxony*, at the instigation of *Luther*. Bishops had nothing to do with these contentions, which are enough to make a Christian “weep.”

Let us now see how it was in the church of *Geneva*, that paragon of Ecclesiastical regimen.

Calvin, the founder of ministerial parity, was endowed by nature with great talents. But he was a man. His new scheme of ministers upon equal ground, with a mixture of *Ruling Elders*, was to do wonders. But, were his expectations realized ? No ; *Geneva* was soon torn with factions, and this gentle system of parity became the source of much contention. *Calvin* was rewarded for his services with banishment ; but after some time he was restored, and a new trial given to *parity*. It appears from his own letters, that the church in that city was miserably distracted, although there was not a Bishop within its atmosphere. The return of *Calvin* evinced again the gentle sway of Presbytery. *Castellio*, a man of great learning, was soon expelled,

* Vind. p. 303.

at the instigation of the Reformer. A violent contest then took place between him and the senate about the election of a minister. It produced almost sedition. *Calvin's* quarrels with *Perinus* proceeded to such a length, that the council became furious against one another. And what do you think was the cause of it? Why, *Perinus* thought it was no harm to recreate himself now and then with dancing. But *Calvin*, although no Bishop, played the tyrant, and forbad that amusement upon pain of excommunication. *Perinus* was not to be treated in that manner. He opposed such tyranny; and two of the ministers who joined with him were turned out of their livings. The contention became general throughout the city, and the common council, taking different sides, almost cut one another's throats. Many more instances of tumults might be adduced as proofs of the gentleness of parity. One person was put to death for libelling *Calvin*. Another was banished the city for preaching against Predestination. *Servetus* was burned for heresy. So much for the mother church of Presbytery.

Switzerland also fared no better under this parity regimen. Dr. *Maurice* says, "*Erastus* having published his *Theses* of excommunication, was confuted by *Beza*; yet there remained still several ministers dissatisfied; as *Bullinger*, *Gualter*, and divers others. This occasioned very great jealousies between the several parties, and it had almost come to a rup-

ture. The churches of the *Palatinate* were no less shaken with this new controversy, and the zealots for this government and discipline took all occasions publicly to maintain them; but the prudence of the Prince prevented the mischiefs which threatened his churches from this question. *Bullinger*, in a letter dated *March 10, 1574*, and *Gualter*, in some letters of his to the Bishops of *London* and *Ely*, and several other eye witnesses, do sufficiently testify the lamentable condition of those reformed churches, and the confusion which Presbyterian government brought upon them.*

The *Geneva* platform was adopted by the reformed in *France*. The constant persecution that church was under, and the bloody wars they had to maintain with the Catholics, kept them, of necessity, more united than their neighbours. But notwithstanding the heavy pressure upon them, *parity* could not preserve them in peace. New and dangerous opinions in religion were continually started, and it required all the exertions of the prudent *Du Plessis*, and a few more of his character, to keep the church in any tolerable degree of tranquillity.

Holland to, where *parity* reigned in perfection, and the face of a Bishop was not to be seen, exhibited a sad scene of distraction. "The church government of that country," says *Dr. Maurice*,

* *Vind.* p. 378, 379.

was not established without great trouble and difficulty, and occasioned no small disturbance.* The civil magistrates and the ministry were constantly at variance. Synod after synod was convened, and they did more harm than good. If these synods had been Episcopal, we should have heard enough about their contentions; but, by good fortune, they were all composed of *parity* men.

But these disputes were not of great moment, in comparison of what followed. The *Arminian* schism threw that church into violent convulsions. For several years there was nothing but conference after conference, and synod after synod. At last it came to tumult, and sedition, and bloodshed. A general synod was then resolved on: it met at *Dort*. The *Remonstrants* were condemned, and these poor people, among whom were some of the most learned men of the age, were treated with the greatest severity. Some of the ministers who would not subscribe, were banished, and some were imprisoned. In short, it was a sad scene. This business was conducted, not under Episcopal regimen, but under the *mild* sway of Presbytery.

“And as these Presbyterian churches have been afflicted with schisms and contentions, so they have been sensible of the mischiefs of heresy. In them, ministers have no great revenues, nor dignities, nor power, and there are no Bishops; and yet

* Vind. p. 184.

heresies make a shift to thrive. *Arians, Socinians, Mennonists*, and others, abound, and are pertinacious.*

But, perhaps, there is no church which has felt the mischiefs of *parity* more than that of *Scotland*. "The concord of that church," says my author, "was much greater while it continued under Superintendents and Bishops, than it has been since *Andrew Melvil* disturbed it with the perfection of the *Geneva* discipline and government. What schisms there arose in the late times between the disciplinarians and the rest, and what disturbances the same sort of men have given of late, is too well known to need a relation, and the field conventicles still witness."† It is utterly inconsistent with historical truth to give the least intimation that the "unity of the church" is preserved by Presbyterian regimen. "Is this proof," asks *Dr. Hobart*, "to be found in the almost infinite number of sects, which sprang from Presbytery in the time of *Oliver Cromwell*? Or does this proof exist in the state of the Presbyterian churches in *Scotland*, or in this country? In *Scotland*, the *Seceders* are a numerous body, who separated from the *parent church*, charging her with being a corrupt church. We find there that Presbyterian government did not preserve the visible unity of the church. Was unity preserved among these *Seceders*, who carried with

* Maurice, p. 390, 391.

† Vind. p. 393.

them Presbyterian government, perfect equality of rank among ministers? In the space of a few years after the secession, they split into the two sects of *Burghers* and *Anti-Burghers*; the former so called from their submitting to what is called the *Burgher oath*, which the latter refuse to take, as inconsistent with the principles of the secession. Here then are three distinct Presbyterian churches, who formally excommunicated one another, and disclaim all church fellowship. Admirable specimen of the efficacy of Presbyterian government in preserving the visible unity of the church! But this is not all. In *Scotland*, there is a fourth Presbyterian church, called the *Relief church*, so denominated from their having *relieved* themselves from the *patronage*, by which livings are conferred in the established church. And, last, though not least of all, the *Reformed Presbyterian church*, commonly called *Covenanters*, who boast that they alone maintain the genuine *Presbyterian* principles, and are the *purest church* on the face of the earth.”*

“ Nearly the same divisions are found among Presbyterians in this country, as subsist in *Scotland*. There are several denominations of them professing subjection to distinct ecclesiastical judicatories, and some of them refusing church fellowship with the others.”† There are also numerous congregations in *New-England*, who are, as to or-

* Apol. p. 221, 222.

† Ibid. p. 232, 234.

dination, Presbyterian, although as to government *Congregational*; and they also have had frequent contentions and numerous schisms. So that look where we will, since the Reformation, and we shall find *parity* the fruitful source of confusion in the church. No government indeed can prevent this altogether. The nature of man is so depraved; he is so much under the sway of pride, and selfishness, and obstinacy, that *offences* of this sort *must come*. But some governments, in their very nature, are better calculated to preserve peace, and prevent schism, than others. That appears to me to be strikingly the case with the Episcopal regimen. Look at the Episcopal church in this country, and you will find it one in its form, in its ordination, and in its worship. It is the same in *England*, in *Ireland*, in *Scotland*, and in *Sweden* and *Denmark*. What an inestimable advantage is this! If a schism *should* take place, it is a difficult matter to induce a Bishop to violate the unity of the church. In countries where there is an establishment, it scarcely ever occurs; and even where there is no establishment, the degradation and loss of character that ensue, and the almost impracticability of preserving the succession, are deterring circumstances. But among Presbyterians these things are continually occurring. A turbulent man can at any time make a schism, and as there is not the least difficulty with respect to ordination, a Presbytery of some sort or other being easily formed, the circum-

stance which is attended with so much difficulty to Episcopalians, who are disposed to be schismatical, is not attended with the slightest inconvenience to Presbyterian schismatics. *They* may be schismatics, and Presbyterians still. But when Episcopalians are guilty of schism, they scarcely ever retain that character, but in almost every instance have recourse to ordination by Presbyters. This is not an imaginary advantage which the Episcopal regimen possesses. Look at the Episcopal churches throughout the world, and it will be found to be a matter of fact, that where Episcopacy is abandoned, there schisms and sects spring up like mushrooms. When, in the seventeenth century, that Apostolical regimen was abolished in *England*, upwards of sixty different sects, according to *Edwards*, a Presbyterian divine, distracted that unhappy country. But as soon as Episcopacy was restored, they gradually died away, and left behind them but five or six of the more decent and sober kind. In *Scotland* too, it was pretty much in the same way. As soon as *Melvil* got his favourite *Geneva* platform introduced, schisms began, and they have not ended to this day; and what is more, never will, as long as *parity* prevails.

When we attend to the operations of our own minds, we find them almost intuitively admitting the expediency of superior ranks in communities of every kind. What has always been the common sentiment, and the common practice of the world,

must be correct. In matters of taste, in moral principles, and in political science, it is allowed to be so. Why is nature, and the common sense of mankind, to be violated in the government of the Christian church? We do not cease to be *men* as soon as we become *Christians*. There is enough of pride, ambition, and perverseness, in both priests and people, to need all those checks which the wisdom of ages has found necessary, to preserve peace and harmony in religious communities. History is uniform in her report upon this subject. The religion of the *Patriarchs*, of the *Jews*, of the *Greeks* and *Romans*, of the *Persians*, of the *Egyptians*, of the *Druids*, of the *Mahometans*, in short, of every nation that deserves to be so called, had its superior and inferior priests; and we know, that in one instance the Almighty expressly enjoined this gradation. If, then, the common sense of mankind be considered as a sure test of truth; if the experience of ages has sanctioned imparity in the ministers of religion, if God himself expressed his approbation of it, by establishing it among his peculiar people, the *Jews*, we may very reasonably conclude, that Jesus Christ would not act in direct opposition to the voice of nature, to the common sense of mankind, and to the example set him by his heavenly Father. And when we add to these *analogical* and *a priori* arguments, the accumulated evidence that has been adduced in proof of the *fact*, I see not what there is wanting to convince an unprejudiced mind, that

Episcopacy is an Apostolical and divine institution.

One more letter, Sir, and I shall take my leave of this subject for the present.

LETTER XXI.

REV. SIR,

YOU go on in the same strain of unqualified invective against Bishops; not recollecting that every thing with which you charge them, may be retorted upon Presbytery in a tenfold degree. You say, "If we examine the history of any Episcopal church on earth, we shall find it exhibiting, to say the least, as large a share of heresy, contention, and schism, as any which bears the Presbyterian form; and, what is more, we shall ever find the Prelates themselves quite as forward as any others in scenes of violence and outrage."

These charges could not have proceeded from a proper motive. If they were even well founded, they ought not to have been advanced. Religion can derive no benefit from criminations of this kind, nor did your argument require the introduction of the subject. I fear you were not under the influence of your usual meekness of spirit, when you committed to paper several passages in your book. With an appearance of much candor and moderation, every now and then expressions drop from your pen, which show that all is not right. I am sorry to

make these observations; but when a man advances ill founded, and, at the same time, severe things, he has no right to expect that they will be passed over in silence.

Before you indulged yourself in charges of this serious nature, you ought to have refreshed your memory with a perusal of the history of the Christian church. If you had, you would have found but one Bishop a heretic for the first three hundred years; and very few, in any age, in comparison of Presbyters and laymen. And as to violence and outrage, I am totally at a loss to determine what you mean, and at what church you point. I cannot think that you have our church in view, or the moderate church of *England*, or of *Ireland*, or the Episcopal church in *Scotland*, or the church of *Sweden*, or of *Denmark*, or of the *Moravians*. What, Sir, do you mean? When you tell us, you will most probably receive an answer.

I have, in the course of this discussion, several times expressed my astonishment at your manner of quoting authors, and at your wide departure from well authenticated facts. You give us another instance. You inform us, that *Eusebius* gives a sad picture of the divisions among Bishops; but you take care not to tell us in what part of his history that picture is to be found. I have looked over his account of the state of the church in the early part of the fourth century; and so far from finding a great corruption of morals, I am astonished at the

faith and patience displayed by all ranks of Christians, under sufferings the most appalling to human nature. Among these Christians, he gives a long list of illustrious Bishops, who endured the most excruciating tortures, rather than renounce their God and Saviour. Read, Sir, his account of the *Dioclesian* persecution, and perhaps you will feel in your heart some tenderness, even for Bishops.

You have given us, Sir, a very unwarrantable account of the *Nicene council*; and to have some colour for your representation, you say, in a note, p. 330, that *Gregory Nazianzen* “speaks of the unprincipled ambition and shameful conduct of the clergy of that council.” When I see the passage which gives that information, I shall not be disposed to doubt that it is to be found in the works of *Gregory*; but then I shall oppose to it the account which *Eusebius* gives us of that council. He was a member of the council, and must, therefore, have known more about it than *Gregory*, who lived fifty years after the event. *Eusebius* says nothing, that I can find, about “unprincipled ambition and shameful conduct.” If you will consult the thirteenth chapter of the third book, you will find that nothing occurred inconsistent with gravity and decorum. He mentions, indeed, an undue degree of warmth that appeared in some of the members, and some instances of personal reflections, which the Emperor, who was present, immediately checked. *Arianism*, and the time of

keeping *Easter*, were the most material points debated in that council, and the first in particular was very interesting; of course it would excite warmth, and warmth generally produces improprieties; but none occurred, according to *Eusebius*, but what the subjects, and the number of the members present, would naturally produce; none that would justify your assertion, that the clergy of that council were men of "unprincipled ambition, and shameful conduct."

When I read the account which *Eusebius* has given of that council, and the canons which were made by it, I cannot perceive in your representation, the least trace of moderation, or conformity to facts. I should think that men who could enact such canons as the following, must be pure themselves, and very zealous to promote purity in others. The second canon ordains, that "those who shall be convicted of any crime, shall be deprived of their ecclesiastical functions." The third forbids "Bishops, Priests, Deacons, and other clergymen, to keep women in the house with them, excepting those of whom there can be no suspicion." The ninth ordains, "that those Priests shall be degraded, who are found either to have sacrificed, or to have been guilty of other crimes before their ordination." The fifteenth forbids "the translation of Bishops and Priests," and ordains "that those who shall be translated, shall return to their first church." The seventeenth or-

claims, "that clergymen who are usurers, or who take sordid gain, shall be deposed."* These canons look as if the Bishops of that council were men of virtue and religion, and not ambitious and unprincipled, as you represent them. Add to this, that they had but lately come out of a most dreadful persecution, which generally purifies both priests and people; and then there can be no doubt that you have given a grossly erroneous account of the council of *Nice*, and the Bishops of the early part of the fourth century.

I should not, Sir, take any notice of your quotation from *Dr. Owen*, were it not to show your readers how strangely you have hooked yourself upon one of the horns of a dilemma. "The first express attempt," says the learned *Dr. Owen*, "to corrupt and divide a church, made from within itself, was that in the church of *Jerusalem*, made by *Thebulis*, because *Simon Cleopas* was chosen Bishop, and he was refused. The same rise had the schisms of the *Novatians* and *Donatists*, the heresies of *Arius* and others." Now, *Simon Cleopas* was either a *diocesan*, or a *congregational* Bishop. If a *diocesan*, then you give up the point, and acknowledge that kind of Episcopacy to be an Apostolic institution. If a *congregational* Bishop, then I would be glad to know, what the conduct of *Thebulis* has to do with *diocesan* Episcopacy. *Dr. Owen*

* Du Pin's Ec. Hist. vol. i. p. 252, 253.

may have been a *learned* man; but if this specimen be any proof, he was not a *reasoner*. And how you could so far forget yourself as to quote with approbation a passage, which implies either a dereliction of your hypothesis, or a circumstance, which, if it has any force, lies entirely against yourself, can be accounted for in no other way, than by supposing that your zeal obscured your understanding.

What you say from page 339 to 341, is only a repetition of what you say in the first part of the letter; to which I have made a reply in my last. But it may be well to take notice of your mode of answering an obvious objection to your reasoning. Your position is, that those who belong to a true, visible church, ought to be better than those who do not. To this I have shown, that the Quaker can talk precisely in the same manner with respect to Presbyterians, that you do with respect to Episcopalians; and that there is no possible way for you to break the force of the retort. This alone is quite sufficient to impose silence upon you, without adding another syllable; for the reasoning of the Quaker, upon the Presbyterian principle, "no ministry, no true church," is perfectly logical. But other modes of reasoning may be adopted by us. I ask you, how do you determine that the members of our church, when placed in equally favourable circumstances, are not better than the members of your church? Will you say, I can see with my eyes and hear with my ears, and cannot perceive that

they are a tittle better than we? But, Sir, have we not eyes and ears as well as you? And are they not as good as yours? Now, suppose their report should be, that we *are* better than you, what would you say to it? I cannot see what, but that *you do not* think so. But suppose *we do*, who is to decide the point? Can any created being do it? I believe not.

I hope I shall not be misunderstood upon this point. I make no claim for Episcopalians to superior goodness. I only put the matter upon this ground for the sake of argument; and to show the weakness of what you seem to think conclusive reasoning. In truth, the whole is mere assumption.

Another mode of reasoning used by us is, that there may be very correct principles, and yet not a suitable practice. But you say, this "is merely an evasion of the argument." And again: "We contend that there is, and must ever be, *more* virtue and holiness *in* the church of Christ, than *out* of it." Then it will follow, as you unchurch the Quakers by making a *ministry* essential to a *true church*; that the objection in the mouth of a Quaker against you, is as strong as the same objection in the mouth of a Presbyterian against us. You ought then in reason to satisfy the Quaker, before you demand of us to satisfy you.

You go on—"Nor do we, by taking this ground, furnish either an infidel or an heretic with a handle

against us." Why not? Because, "as long as he could only with truth say, 'some of you, Christians, are as bad as infidels,' I would confidently reply, they are not Christians but *hypocrites*; for if they had any portion of the spirit of their Master, they would not act thus. But if he could really make it appear that Christians are *in general*, and *as a body*, in no respect better than infidels, he would certainly establish his argument." And do you really think, Sir, that these are parallel cases? Is there no difference between infidels and professing Christians who have not a *valid* ministry? Have not these the Bible to regulate their principles, and improve them in virtue and piety? Infidels reject this source of information altogether. They therefore can have no knowledge of God, but by their own unassisted reason; and what a fallible guide that is, the history of mankind sufficiently evinces. Were a Christian in a situation, in which he could not attend any public worship, but had to rely entirely upon his Bible for instruction, we might reasonably suppose that he would be a better man than the infidel, who rejects that source of instruction. Otherwise, what advantage has good instruction over bad? What advantage has revelation over reason? In that book he would find that *the wrath of God is revealed against all unrighteousness*; that *remission of sins is preached in the name of Jesus Christ*, and in no other name whatever. Would not this (the blessing of God attending it)

have a powerful tendency to raise him from a *death of sin to a life of righteousness*? It certainly would. But the infidel, by rejecting the Bible, foregoes this inestimable advantage. He trusts to his own fallible reason, which can never assure him, that, were he even to repent of his past transgressions, and live righteously for the future, this would recommend him to the favour of God, and give him a reasonable hope of eternal happiness. Reason never produced this conviction in the minds of the heathen. They were *without hope, and without God in the world*. Here there is a striking difference between the case of the infidel and that of the Christian, although the latter were in a situation in which he could not attend any kind of public instruction and worship. But when the Christian regularly attends public worship, although the ministers who officiate have not received a *valid* ministry, yet the benefit of joining in the prayers and praises of a religious assembly, and the moral and religious lessons that are taught from the pulpit, must, in reason, be considered as very great.

Still farther. In a church in which there is not a scriptural and valid ministry, both those who administer what are deemed sacraments, and those who receive them, may receive considerable benefit from them. And as the ministers who officiate sincerely believe that they have a right to do so, and the people also have the same persuasion, there can be no doubt, that a God of mercy will

pardon their involuntary error, and dispense that grace to their well meant endeavour to do his will, which is not attached by promise to unwarranted administrations. If you should not deem these observations satisfactory, you will be under the necessity of excluding from divine grace and mercy, those Christians who have no ministry.

Once more, Sir—The whole of your reasoning upon this point appears to me to rest upon a false foundation. It supposes that the ministry is of the essence of religion. There may be, and we know there is, faith in Christ, and love to God and man, which are the essentials of Christianity, where there is no ministry. A ministry is, in my opinion, essential to a *visible* church. In this I believe Episcopalian and Presbyterians are generally agreed. It is, therefore, of great importance to preserve it. What God has appointed, no man, no church has a right to reject. Still some good people may be so unhappy as to err upon this point. Of the cause of their error we are not competent judges. We must leave them to him who judgeth righteously.

Upon the whole matter, in the words of Dr. *Hobart*, “ He who *worketh all things according to the council of his own will*, may dispense with his own institutions, and depart from the settled order of the economy of grace. It may please him to bless the *sincere* exertions and labours of those who reject the *positive institutions* and laws of his house. *He giveth not to man an account of his doings.*

The inefficacy of these institutions on the lives of many, and the piety and holiness which others exhibit who reject them, may be trials of our *humility* and *submission*; tests, whether under these inauspicious appearances we may not arrogantly exclaim, *To what purpose are these positive ordinances? We may be virtuous and pious without them.* Ah! let not the humble believer be seduced by this specious, but arrogant reasoning from the *ways of God's appointment*. It was this proud spirit which urged our first parents to violate a *positive institution* of the Almighty; which lost them paradise, and the fallen angels the glory *of their first estate.*"*

Thus, Sir, it appears to me, that there is no difficulty in answering fairly and solidly, the objection which you make to Episcopacy, when carried so far as to unchurch all non-Episcopalians. If we once adopt the principle, that we are not to admit any thing into our religious creed which bears hard upon others, I really do not know at what point we are to stop. I fear this principle will put all religions exactly upon a par. The serious and inquisitive mind will never be satisfied till it rests upon what it deems truth; and when once it is settled upon that ground, it will never be induced to relinquish it from any supposed or real inconvenience that may result from it to others. Were the contrary to be admitted, a ministry must be given up;

* Apology, page 248.

for the consequence offends those who have none. Nay, Christianity must be given up; for it offends *Jews, Turks, Idolaters, and Infidels* of every kind.

This, Sir, or something like it, would be the answer to your imaginary difficulty, from that class of Episcopalians who pronounce the Presbyterian ministry absolutely invalid. The other class, although they place Episcopacy upon the ground of Apostolical and divine right, as well as the first; yet, not thinking that it necessarily unchurches others, are not at all concerned with your objection. This class then have the advantage of you (if there be any advantage in it); for, by your doctrine, a ministry is made essential to a visible church; and, consequently, you unchurch the Quakers, and some other mystical professors of Christianity.

But one more point now remains to be considered: it is the doctrine of *uninterrupted succession*. It is very evident to me, that although you admit the doctrine for the sake of argument, yet that you do not believe it. If so, you are not a Presbyterian, for the *Westminster* divines, and all true Presbyterians, maintain that doctrine as strenuously as Episcopalians. Dr. *Mason* and Mr. *M'Leod* assert it most pointedly. I think then, that they cannot possibly be pleased with this, and several other parts of your book. Were I a Presbyterian, I should certainly say, *non tali auxilio*; for in my humble opinion, you have ruined the Presbyterian cause. Were it not too late in the discussion, and that I

am heartily tired of the labour I have sustained, I would enter into a very minute detail of particulars ; but, perhaps, on some future occasion, I may be induced to do it. I have already said something upon the point in my thirteenth *letter* ; but Mr. *How* has said a great deal more ; and whoever reads his *masterly* performance with an attentive and impartial mind, will be satisfied that I am correct in my assertion.

The doctrine of *uninterrupted succession* appears to me to be capable of strict logical proof. In reasoning upon any point, there must be some allowed principle upon which the reasoning must ultimately rest ; for we cannot go on adding argument to argument *ad infinitum*. The principle admitted in this case is this—No man has a right to act as an officer in Christ's kingdom without a commission from him. The greatest enthusiast, as well as the most sober Christian, admits this to be reasonable, necessary, and scriptural. They differ only as to the manner in which the commission is conveyed. Let us now see whether we cannot rest our arguments in proof of uninterrupted succession upon this ground. If we can, the point must necessarily be considered as established.

There are but two ways pretended, in which a commission is conveyed from Christ to his ministers. The one is *ordinary*, the other *extraordinary*. The latter we have nothing to do with. In the first way, none can give a commission, but those who

are authorized by the commission they themselves bear, to commission others. This is undeniable. But the question is, To whom was this power of appointing stewards in Christ's household given? It must have been given either to the people, or to ministers. We cannot possibly tell by our own reason, to whom Christ gave this power; we must, therefore, have recourse to Revelation. Now, there is not one tittle in the whole book of God, which intimates that this power was given to the people: but, on the contrary, the original commission, and every transaction relating to a ministry, prove that none but ministers of some sort (it matters not what, as it relates to the present argument) have a right to ordain. They then who are ordained by laymen, cannot possibly derive a commission in this way from the great *Head* of the church; of course, ordination by ministers must be the only scriptural mode. The New Testament shows this to have been the case. The Apostles were authorized by Christ to act in his name; and he promised to preserve in his church to the end of time the authority which his commission conveyed. By virtue of this commission, the Apostles ordained others, as *St. Paul* did *Timothy* and *Titus*; and these officers committed the same commission to other faithful men; and thus a succession begun by Christ, and continued by his Apostles, and by those who succeeded to the authority contained in the original commission, has been preserved, under the special

providence of Christ, who has bound himself to the church, that a succession shall be preserved to the end of the world.

“The *Christian* church” (to use the words of Dr. *Chandler*) “was thus originally constituted under officers of divine appointment, as evidently as the *Jewish* was; and Christians in the times of the Apostles, had no more right to set up an authority different from theirs, or in opposition to it, than the Israelites had, in the rebellion of *Korah*, to gainsay *Moses* and *Aaron* in these very popular words: ‘Ye take too much upon you, seeing *all the congregation are holy*, every one of them, and *the Lord is among them*; wherefore then lift ye up yourselves above the congregation of the Lord?’ Let it now be observed, that what were the rights of Christians in the Apostles’ days, the very same, neither more nor less, are the rights of Christians at this day.”* Consequently, as the power of ordaining was not lodged in the body diffusive, but in the hands of particular persons, it can be derived from the Apostles in no other way than by *personal* communication, or succession, in a line that has never been interrupted.

If then all authority in the church is *mediately* derived from Christ, as all Presbyterians allow, an uninterrupted succession is an inevitable conse-

* Appeal further defended, p. 81, 82, 83.

quence, and is capable of demonstration. "If authority can be conveyed from Christ mediately, by a succession that is interrupted, there must be somewhere in the succession a person who can give that which he has not. If the authority first given to *A*, is to pass on successively to *B*, to *C*, to *D*, and to *E*; should the conveyance stop, or be interrupted at *C*, so that it passes not on to *D*; in that case *D* does not receive it, and, therefore, cannot convey it to *E*, unless *D* be able to give what it has not. Supposing the authority, when it comes down to *C*, to be annihilated, or to cease; unless it be renewed, *E* can never be invested with it. The question then is, who shall renew it? Now, all authority from Christ must flow from Christ; if it begins, and has its source short of him, it is not his authority. If he pleases to renew it, he may give it immediately to *E*, or he may give it to *D*, by him to be communicated to *E*; and in either way *E* may be invested with Christ's authority. But now let us suppose that any number of men upon earth, or that all the Angels in heaven should attempt to renew the authority of Christ, once interrupted and lost; unless a stream can have a higher derivation than its source; unless these men, or these Angels can give what they have not, the thing is impossible. They may give what they have, they may give their *own* authority; but *Christ's* authority they cannot give, unless they have received it. And

if they have received it, it is not they that renew the authority, but Christ himself.”*

Thus then it appears to be capable of demonstration, that an uninterrupted succession of ministers is essential to the Christian church; and that if there has been any failure, a ministry deriving its authority from Christ, has also failed. But this we know cannot be; for Christ has promised that it should not; and what he has promised, he is certainly able to fulfil.

And as the order of the clergy is a positive institution by the great *Head* of the church, so the different degrees of the ministry must of necessity be a positive institution by the same authority. If then Episcopacy has been proved to be a divine institution, it as necessarily follows, that the succession of Bishops has been as uninterrupted as the ministry. For if to the order of Bishops the power of ordaining was attached, then it follows that the Episcopal order is essential to the perpetuity of the ministry. Of course a succession of such ordainers is essential. Admit then that Episcopacy is a divine institution, and the succession is a matter of necessity, and is no more capable of failure than the ministry is. Being the law of God's house, it must answer the purpose for which it was established. It is no solid objection to say, that the ministry is too

* Chandler's Appeal defended, p. 60, 61.

much under the control of man to be susceptible of perpetuity, and uninterrupted succession. The will of man is as much under the control of the Almighty as the winds of heaven, or the ebbing and flowing of the tides. Were he to withdraw his influence from the creation, the law of nature, as it is called, would not prevent, for a moment, universal confusion. The law of God, whether it respects the creation, the moral system, or the positive institutions of the church, must produce its effects; and although deviations may, for wise reasons, be permitted in the natural and moral world, and in the church, yet the general effect intended to be produced by the original constitutions, will infallibly take place; and every thing upon which the Creator has stamped perpetuity, will no doubt continue till his purposes shall be answered.

Thus I think it appears, both from reason and scripture, that the uninterrupted succession of the ministry, and of consequence Episcopacy, if it be a divine institution, is a necessary consequence of the original establishment; and that there is no more danger of its failing, than there is of the church failing. It may indeed be destroyed in particular situations; so may the church also; and we know that in fact this has been the case; but so long as the sun and moon endure, so long will the church and her ministry endure.

It is an objection that sometimes meets us, that

an uninterrupted succession cannot be proved by written records. This is really very weak. We do not want records to prove the succession of the ministry. Its divine institution, and the promise to be with it, to the end of the world, is a better proof of succession than a million of volumes would be. But although I deem this a sufficient answer to the objection, yet I will meet it in another way: I say then, that we have records, equal to those for a succession of the manuscripts of the Bible. Suppose, Sir, a Deist should ask,—What proof can you give that the present *Greek* Testament is a faithful copy of the original *Gospels* and *Epistles*? Would you not tell him that it is a copy of the oldest *Greek* manuscripts now extant—that it has been compared with other versions, the *Latin*, the *Syriac*, the *Arabic*, the *Persic*, the *Ethiopic*; and that, for this, we have the testimony of the learned, which, from the nature of the case, is the only evidence we can have? If the Deist should proceed in his inquiry, and ask again,—How do you know that the manuscripts, from which the present *Greek* Testament is taken are genuine transcripts of more ancient manuscripts, and they again of still more ancient, till we reach the originals? To this you would say, we have the testimony of the learned in every age up to the Apostolic. Add to this, that we find our present *Greek* Testament corresponding with innumerable passages in the writers of every age, from the first to the sixteenth

century; and then you have the most complete evidence the case admits of, for the genuineness and authenticity of our present *Greek* copy. Just the same evidence we have for the succession of the ministry in every age. The testimony of a crowd of writers in every period of the church declares it to be so; nay, the very existence of the church proves it to be so; for a church and a ministry always go together. The one cannot be supported, cannot exist, without the other. There may indeed have been false pretenders to the ministry in every age, as there have been false copies of the sacred writings; but both were rejected by the church; the one condemned as forged, the other as invalid.

Notwithstanding the strong and invincible arguments that may be offered in support of the doctrine of *uninterrupted succession*, yet you inform us, that several writers have pronounced "the claim of succession to be as futile as it is unnecessary; assailing it with the most pointed ridicule, as well as with formidable arguments."

That several Presbyterians, Independents, Soci-nians, and even Episcopalians, have opposed the claim of succession, is undoubtedly as true as that several Deists have opposed the claim of Revelation; and that they have attempted to ridicule what they could not answer, is also true. But I am very sorry, Sir, that you should give the slightest countenance to the notion, that ridicule is a proper weapon on a serious subject. The inquiry, whether

the Bible is the word of God, and whether the commission which Christ gave to his Apostles has been handed down by *vicarious* ordination to the present time, are certainly too serious to be ridiculed. When, therefore, I read an author who uses ridicule, I take it for granted that he has no solid arguments to offer; that the truth is too powerful for him, and that, therefore, he has recourse to distortion, which divests truth of its native beauty and simplicity, and gives it a form calculated to produce laughter mingled with contempt. Such a weapon will never be used by a serious Christian against any thing that is not in itself ridiculous; and surely what can be supported by sound reasoning, and by the word of God, can never be deserving of that character.

You conclude, Sir, as you began, with undesigningly misrepresenting some of the writers of our church. You say, *Chillingworth*, *Barrow*, and *Hoadly*, "have taken the negative side" of this question. If you had given a reference to that part of *Chillingworth's* writings which contain what you ascribe to him, I should, of course, consult the place; but as you have not, I shall not run over his works in quest of what I am fully satisfied can never be found. I am perfectly weary of the trouble you have given me in this respect; and I am sure that no one will blame me for declining it on this occasion.—As to *Barrow*, I have shown, in my *eleventh letter*, by several quotations from him,

that he maintains the doctrine of *succession*, as much as any man; and also that *Hoadly* maintains it in his book on the "Reasonableness of Conformity;" admitting, however, in a case of necessity, a departure from the line of succession. It is true, that in the latter part of his life, he adopted a principle that totally annihilated the church of Christ. He supposed that Christ left no authority whatever in his church; and, consequently, that *succession* is wholly needless. This produced the famous *Bangorian* controversy; in which *Hoadly* was assailed by the ablest writers of the church, and particularly by Mr. *Law*, who gave him one of the most complete defeats that perhaps any man ever received. If you had *Hoadly* in view when he thus laid the "axe at the root of the tree," you are extremely welcome to him; but if you had reference to the book I have mentioned, you are greatly mistaken, as I have shown, page 301.

To this doctrine of unbroken succession, so strenuously maintained by all the ancients, and by the church to which you belong, you evidently are not well affected. However, you will take for granted, "that it is the only channel through which ministers of the present day can have the Apostolic commission transmitted to them. Supposing this to be the case, nothing is more easy than to show, on Presbyterian principles, that the succession in *our* church is as distinct, regular, and unbroken, as that of the Episcopal church."

Were, Sir, this to be admitted, it can do you no good, unless you can prove Presbytery to be the original constitution of the church. Then the same arguments that I have used in support of Episcopal succession, would apply to Presbyterian; because, undoubtedly, Christ would take care of his own institution. But even in this case, whatever may be said of your church, it is very certain, that several sects make no pretensions to succession, and, therefore, no care is taken to preserve it. This is the case with the Baptists, Independents, and others. In *New-England*, there have been numerous instances of lay ordinations; consequently, all derived from that source have no pretensions to succession. In *France*, for several years, lay ordination was practised and defended; but at length it was given up, as unscriptural and unwarrantable. The ministry of the *Huguenots*, then, cannot flow in an unbroken line. *Calvin* himself was not ordained, if *Beza*, his friend and colleague, knew any thing about the matter; and yet, no doubt, he ordained numbers. Is it probable, then, that the church of *Geneva* has a succession? With respect to the church of *Scotland*, I do not know that lay ordination was ever admitted by her; but it is very certain, that for several years there was no such thing as imposition of hands. This, I think, all sober Christians will acknowledge to be very unscriptural, to say the least. The *English* Presbyterian succession is, I believe, the most pure, as the

first *non-conformists* were ordained by English Bishops.

But admitting that Presbyterian orders are every where free from suspicion, yet there is one obvious objection to them. When the Reformation began, all the churches in *Europe* were Episcopal, and all the Presbyterians then existing, had been ordained by Bishops. But no Bishop ever gave a Presbyterian authority to ordain. The utmost authority given is, *to preach the word*, and to administer the sacraments. Whence then did those Presbyters who first ordained, derive that power? The office of a Presbyterian is a gift *mediately* from Christ. But a person who receives a gift, receives just as much as the gift implies, and not a tittle more. But the power of ordaining was not a part of the gift to the Presbyters at the Reformation. How then could they ordain others when they were not empowered so to do? There appears to be a difficulty here: How is it to be removed?

There is one expression, which, before I close, it may be proper to notice. You say, at the bottom of page 346, that *imparity* is a *Popish* doctrine. Pray, Sir, do you know what *Poperly* is? I am perfectly cool, I do assure you. I will not give way to any indignant expressions; but I do insist upon it, that you are totally ignorant of the meaning of the word *Poperly*, or you would not assert that *imparity* sprang out of the church of *Rome*; for this must be your meaning, or you mean nothing to the pur-

pose. Besides, this assertion is inconsistent with your own concession. I have proved that the Papal supremacy did not exist till the seventh century, and you allow that *imparity* prevailed centuries before that period. Can a thing spring from a source that did not exist till ages after?

Again: How happened it, Sir, that when the assertion under consideration dropped from your pen, you did not recollect *Jerome's* account of the church of *Alexandria*? He assures us, that *imparity* existed in that church from its foundation. Poor *Jerome*! How you do treat him! When he speaks obscurely, he is a great man—a man of great learning and research; but when he speaks *plainly* and *positively* in favour of Episcopacy, then he is treated with as little respect as you treat the office of a Bishop.

Further: If *imparity* originated in the church of *Rome*, there must be some evidence of it. Now, Sir, I will put the matter to a fair trial. I call upon you to produce the evidence, that Episcopal *imparity* began in the church of *Rome*. You have committed yourself, Sir; you must, therefore, either prove, or renounce your assertion.

Lastly. Weigh impartially the evidence exhibited in these letters, for the Apostolic origin of Episcopacy, and then lay your hand upon your heart, and in the fear of God say, whether you do not think that you have most grossly libelled the whole Episcopal church throughout the world, in

ascribing Episcopacy to corruption, and to a love of power and domination, from which Papal supremacy originated. Something explicit upon this point will be expected from you, in the course of the controversy. Silence will not be taken as an acknowledgment of error, but as a pertinacious adherence to it; and we shall not be satisfied unless you either say, "I have erred," or maintain your assertion with learning and argument.

You next sum up all that you have said in favour of *parity*, and against *Episcopacy*, in the following triumphant manner.

"You have seen," (addressing your *Christian brethren*) "that the scriptures contain but *one commission* for the gospel ministry."—Yes, Sir, and we have seen that the *one commission* was conveyed in all its plenitude to that order of men, who, according to scripture and antiquity, took the place of the Apostles; and to the Presbyters, but a part of the authority implied in that commission. This was proved in a particular manner by the authority given to *Timothy* and *Titus*, and by the testimony of antiquity.

"You have seen—that *Bishop* and *Presbyter* are uniformly used in the New Testament as convertible titles for the same office; that the same *character* and *powers* are also, in the sacred writings, ascribed interchangeably to *Bishops* and *Presbyters*, thus plainly establishing their identity of *order* as well as of *name*."—We have seen that the community

of names is a gross and insufferable fallacy—that it does not follow, because the second order had a double title, that there were none who presided over them. We have seen that the Apostles governed those Presbyters and Bishops, and that they devolved their supremacy on a number of persons, to whom the care of churches was committed; and that this order had one of the titles, at first given to Presbyters, appropriated to them. That title is *Bishop*, according to all the Fathers, who are positive and decisive upon this point.

“ You have seen—that the Christian church was organized by the Apostles, after the model of the Jewish *Synagogue*, which was undoubtedly *Presbyterian* in its form.”—We have seen that the *Synagogue* and the *Church* are essentially different in their origin, their constitution, and their ministry; that the former was of human appointment, that the latter is of divine; that the ministry of the former possessed no character of sacredness, no commission from God, but from the people; that there was no principle of unity in the *Synagogue*, no sacraments, no marks of a *Church*; in short, that it was no *Church*; and, therefore, that the *Synagogue* was not the model of the Christian Church.

“ You have seen that all the arguments which our Episcopal brethren profess to derive from scripture in favour of their system, are perfectly nugatory, and do not yield it the least solid support.” We have seen that the Apostolic commission is to be

continued in the church to the end of the world; that it was devolved upon *Barnabas*, *Epaphroditus*, *Timothy*, *Titus*, and the *Apocalyptic Angels*; and that these had their successors, who were in power and rank superior to the Presbyters. This, we have observed, is a decisive proof, that the Apostolic pre-eminence is to be continued in the church for ever.

“You have seen that the *Fathers* of the first two centuries are so far from furnishing a single passage which gives even a semblance of aid to the Episcopal cause, that, like the scriptures, they every where speak a language wholly inconsistent with it, and favourable only to the doctrine of ministerial parity.”—We have seen that this is a misrepresentation gross to excess. We have seen the testimonies of *Clemens* of *Alexandria*, of *Tertullian*, of *Ireneus*, of *Dionysius*, of *Hegesippus*, and of *Ignatius*, in the second century; and we have seen that the evidence is so clear and strong, that *Blondel*, *Salmasius*, *Chamier*, and a number of others, have given up the point after some time in that century. We have also seen, that the third century affords a large collection of testimonies to Episcopal government as existing not only in that age, but also in the two preceding ages; and that the fourth century bears the same testimony. And the conclusion from all this is, that we have clear, decisive evidence for the Apostolic institution of Episcopacy.

“ You have seen that the great body of the *Reformers* and other *witnesses* for the truth, of different ages and nations, with one voice maintained the same doctrine, as taught in scripture, and in the primitive church; and that even the most conspicuous *English Reformers*, while they assisted in organizing an Episcopal establishment in their own country, defended it on the ground of *human expediency*, and the *will of the magistrate*, rather than that of *divine right*.”—We have seen that all this is at utter variance with the true state of the case; that all the Reformers of the church of *England* placed Episcopacy on the ground, not of *human expediency*, but of *Apostolic institution*. We have seen this to be the fact from the most authentic documents; from the *Questions and Answers*, from the preface to the *Ordinal*, from the *Ordination* offices, from *Cranmer’s* catechism, and sermon on the *Keys*, and from the testimonies of *Collier* and *Burnet*. We have also seen that those distinguished *witnesses* for the truth, the *Waldenses*, and the Protestants of *Bohemia*, were Episcopalians upon the ground of *Apostolic institution*, and that they preserved this primitive government under all their sufferings, and in defiance of all the power of their enemies. We have seen all this proved by the testimony of historians the most respectable, and the most worthy of credit.

“ You have seen that the church of *England*, and those churches which have immediately descended

from her, *stand absolutely alone, in the whole Protestant world, in representing Bishops as an order of clergy superior to Presbyters; all other Protestants, even those who adopt a sort of prelacy, having pronounced it to be a mere human invention.*"

—We have seen that this is in direct opposition to matter of fact. We have seen that not only the churches of *England and Ireland*, and the Episcopal church in *Scotland* and in this country, place Episcopacy upon the ground of Apostolic institution, but that also the *Moravian church*, and the churches of *Sweden and Denmark* place it upon the same ground. We have also seen that nearly the whole world is Episcopal; and that no proof can be brought that there ever existed a single Presbyterian church from the Apostolic age to the Reformation. And to this may be added, the late information given by *Dr. Buchanan*, that the *Syrian church in the East-Indies* is Episcopal, and has been so from its foundation.

"You have seen some of the most learned and pious Bishops and other divines of the church of *England*, utterly disclaiming the divine right of diocesan Episcopacy; and declaring that they considered a great majority of the clergy of that church, in later as well as earlier times, as of the same opinion with themselves."—We have seen that nearly all the divines whom you quote, as conceding that Episcopacy is a human institution, do, in the most express manner, maintain that it is an Apostolic in-

situation ; and that this is the opinion of the great body of Episcopal divines is beyond all doubt.

“ Finally: You have seen that the *gradual introduction* of Prelacy, within the first four centuries, was not only *practicable*, but one of the most *natural* and *probable* of all events ; and that the most competent judges, and profound inquirers into early history, have pronounced that it actually took place.”

—We have seen that there was no change, either *gradual*, or otherwise, in the government of the church ; that not a single writer of antiquity gives any hint of a change ; but, on the contrary, that they all declare Episcopacy was established by the Apostles. We have also seen, that, from the afflicted state of the church during the first three centuries, from the nature of the human mind which cannot act without a motive, and from the impossibility of assigning any motive for an attempt to alter the government of the church, no such change could have taken place. We have further seen, that if men could have been found weak and wicked enough to make the attempt, still that it was impracticable to succeed without the aid of the civil arm ; and *that*, we know, for three centuries, was exerted, not to give distinction to the church of Christ, but to leave not a trace of it upon the face of the earth. And, lastly, we have seen, that the opponents of Episcopacy, confidently as they talk about a change, cannot so much as name the century in which the change took place, but that they are at utter variance.

upon this point among themselves. From all these considerations we conclude, that no change took place; but that Episcopacy is an *Apostolic and divine institution*.

To conclude: We have seen that your book, from the beginning to the end, is almost one continued chain of misstatements of facts, misrepresentation of authors—bold, unfounded assertions—false reasoning—palpable contradictions of your own assertions, of the principles of your own church, of the writers of your own denomination, and what is worse than all, of the holy scriptures. All this must have been very evident to every attentive and impartial reader. But still it may be well again to bring to view these particulars, that every one who wishes to see the truth, may be satisfied that I am perfectly correct in my assertion. The references will be to my own *Letters*, in which the proofs of your errors are exhibited.

Misstatements of Facts.

1. You say, that *Dionysius*, Bishop of *Alexandria*, attended the council of *Antioch*, in the year 260. *Eusebius* says that he was not there; being detained by age and infirmities. Letter iv. p. 81.

2. You say, that *Dalmatius*, who assisted at the general council of *Ephesus*, in the fifth century, told the Emperor, that “there were 6000 Bishops in the council.” You quote no ancient author for this.

for a very good reason—you could not. Indeed, it carries absurdity upon the face of it; and it contradicts *Du Pin*, and *Cave*, who say that about 200 attended. Letter iv. p. 84, 85, 86.

3. You say, that *St. Patrick* planted congregational Episcopacy in *Ireland*. This is absolutely incredible. A Bishop, acting under the Pope of *Rome*, planting *parity* in the churches he founded, is too ridiculous. *Mosheim* gives such an account of the matter as every man would expect—*Patrick* planted Episcopacy. Dr. *Maurice* gives the same account. Letter iv. p. 87, 88, 89, 90.

4. You assert, that the Bishop lived in the same house with his Presbyters. This also is too ridiculous for any man to believe. It is a gross misstatement, as will be seen Letter iv. p. 91, 92.

5. You say, that “*Ireneus* was Bishop of *Lyons*, when he was sent with a letter from that church to *Eleutherus*, Bishop of *Rome*.” This contradicts *Eusebius*, who says that *Ireneus* was but a Presbyter at that time, and that he was not Bishop of *Lyons* till after his return. Letter vii. p. 169.

6. You assert, that the business of the *Questions* and *Answers* occurred in the year 1548; whereas it is evident from *Burnet*, that it took place in the year 1540, before the death of *Henry* the eighth, when the Reformation had made but little progress. Letter xii. p. 11, 12.

7. You inform us, “that several foreign divines who had only Presbyterian ordination, were allowed

to hold benefices in *England*." Of this you give no proof; nor do you so much as name the foreign divines. I have, however, supplied the omission. They were *P. Martyr*, *M. Bucer*, and *P. Fagius*. The two last were never admitted to any Ecclesiastical benefice, but only to academical preferments. The first held a benefice, but he was previously ordained by a Bishop. Letter xv. p. 40.

8. You assert, that "*Bancroft* was the first man who preached up the divine right of Episcopacy." This is contrary to fact. *Cranmer* preached it long before *Bancroft*. So did the other Reformers, and some time after them, *Whitgift* preached it. The ordination offices also maintain that doctrine. Letter xv. p. 57, 58, 59.

9. You say, that the constitution of the church of *Scotland* was founded on the Presbyterian plan. On the contrary, I have proved from the most respectable historians, that the Reformers of that church adopted the *Lutheran* plan of *Superintendents*; and that *parity* of ministers was not admitted till twenty years after the Reformation. Letter xv. p. 60, 61.

10. You maintain, that the *Swedish* Bishops are no more than *Superintendents*. This is in direct contradiction to *Mosheim*. Letter xvi. p. 70.

11. You adduce the *Waldenses* as witnesses to ministerial parity; and assert "that their Ecclesiastical organization was Presbyterian in its form." This has been proved to be a gross error. The proofs are taken from *Mosheim*, *Allix*, *Commenius*,

and the *Bohemian* church, in its preface to the book called *Ratio Disciplina*, &c. Letter xvi. p. 78, 79, 80.

12. You misstate the times when infant communion, the power of Metropolitans, and the Papacy took their rise. Letter xviii. p. 136 to 150.

13. You assert, that the people elected their Bishops in the first three centuries. This is certainly contrary to fact, during by far the greater part of that period. Letter xviii. p. 150, 151, 152. These are but a part of your misstatements.

Misrepresentation of Authors.

1. You have misrepresented *Jerome*. Several pointed, decisive testimonies have been adduced from this author. When he is not obscure, no writer of antiquity bears stronger testimony to the Apostolic institution of Episcopacy. Letter i. passive.

2. *Hilary* is misrepresented. He says, "In the absence of the Bishop, the Presbyters *consignant*;" or, more probably, *consecrant*—consecrate the Eucharist. At any rate, it does not signify *ordain*. Letter ii. p. 33, 34, 35, 36.

3. You grossly misrepresent *Chrysostom* and *Theodoret*. They most pointedly and unequivocally assert the Apostolic institution of Episcopacy. Letter ii. p. 38, 39, 40, 41.

4. You give an unfair view of the testimonies of *Primasius* and *Sedulius*. They do no more than

assert the community of names ; to which Episcopalians readily subscribe. Letter ii. p. 42.

5. Your view of the condemnation of *Aërius*, is utterly inconsistent with the accounts of *Epiphanius* and *St. Augustine*. Letter ii. p. 42, 43, 44.

6. You misrepresent the address of *Cyprian's* 39th Epistle. To make it comport with your order of Ruling Elders, you insert the word *Elders*, which is not in the address. Letter iii. p. 67.

7. You make *Numidicus* a Ruling Elder, when *Cyprian* says, he joined him with his Clergy, that their number might be recruited with such illustrious Priests—*gloriosis sacerdotibus*. Letter iii. p. 69.

8. You have vilified the *Apostolic Canons*, which Bishop *Beveridge* has amply proved to be the decrees of Synods in the second and third centuries, collected at different times, and by different persons. *Blondel* acknowledges that they are as ancient as the third century. Letter v. p. 114, 115, 116, 117.

9. You have misrepresented *Dodwell* in what he says with respect to *Peter*. Letter v. p. 128, 129.

10. You have most egregiously misrepresented *Cyprian* in the few quotations you give us from his writings, and particularly when you say, that he calls Presbyters his *colleagues*. He never once calls them so. Letter v. p. 135.

11. You have given a ridiculous account of *Tertullian's* High Priest, who, you suppose, " might have been the *standing Moderator* of the Presbytery." Letter vi. p. 142, 143.

12. You misrepresent *Clemens Alexandrinus*, who distinctly enumerates the orders of Bishop, Presbyter and Deacon; and asserts that there are precepts in the holy scriptures relating to each of them; consequently, that they are of divine institution. Letter vi. p. 155.

13. You have given an unfair view of the testimonies of *Ireneus*. Nothing can be more explicit than his assertion, that Bishops succeeded to the pre-eminence of the Apostles. Letter vii. p. 163, 164, 165.

14. You have, even to a degree of ridiculousness, misrepresented *Ignatius*. His *Epistles* are such a powerful support to the Episcopal cause, that the most learned advocates of Presbytery have never attempted to bend them in favour of their hypothesis. Letter vii. p. 182, 183, 184, 185.

15. You have entirely perverted the meaning of *Origen* and *Hilary*, in order to make them give a favourable look towards *Ruling Elders*. They do not give that order the slightest support. Letter viii. p. 204, 207, 208.

16. You have given an explication of the various texts of scripture adduced in the course of the discussion, which is at utter variance with the explication of the Fathers. As the point in dispute is a matter of fact, they must be infinitely better judges of the evidence of that fact than any moderns can be. Letters ix. x.

17. You have greatly misrepresented *Barrow*,

Dodwell, and *Hoadly*, on the subject of *uninterrupted succession*. The latter is misrepresented on the supposition that you had reference to his *Reasonableness of Conformity*. Letter xi. p. 296, 297, 300, 301, 302.

18. You have totally misrepresented the nature of the *Jewish Synagogue*; and, in consequence, have erroneously made it the exemplar of the Christian church. Letter xii.

19. You have given an erroneous view of the *Institution of a Christian man*. It maintains a *parity* of Bishops in opposition to Papal supremacy; but not a *parity* among all the ministers of the Gospel. Letter xiv. vol. ii. p. 3.

20. You have misrepresented the principle upon which *Cranmer* took out a new commission for the exercise of his office. He did not thereby acknowledge any spiritual authority in the King; as is evident from *Burnet's* history of the Reformation. Letter xiv. p. 15, 16.

21. You have given a very false representation of the *old Ordinal*. Letter xiv. p. 19—27.

22. You have grossly misrepresented the canons of *Elfric*. They bear a direct testimony to Episcopal pre-eminence. Letter xvi. p. 94, 95.

23. You have ascribed to Archbishop *Anselme*, a work which *Cave* says is *spurious*. Your quotation therefore is good for nothing. Letter xvi. p. 96.

24. You have given a very improper view of

Whitgift, Bilson, Jewel, Stillingfleet, Burnet, and several other writers. Letter xvii. passim.

25. Your view of the *Rise and Progress of Episcopacy* is nothing but misrepresentation from first to last. It is in direct contradiction to the nature of the human mind, to notorious facts, to the circumstances of the church, and to the testimony of all antiquity. Letters xviii. xix. passim.

These, Sir, are but a part of your misrepresentations. They are, however, enough for a specimen:

3. Unfounded Assertions.

1. All your misstatements of facts, and misrepresentation of authors, are so many unfounded assertions. To these I will add a few more.

2. You assert that *Jerome* informs us, that the Presbyters ordained their Bishop at *Alexandria*. This is without foundation. He says no such thing. Letter i. p. 19.

3. Your caution to your readers to beware of the writers of the third century, cannot be justified by facts. None of your observations can be supported. Letter iii. p. 59, 60, 61, 62.

4. You assert, that there was but one congregation at *Carthage*. This has been proved to be groundless. Letter iii. p. 70, 71.

5. You say, "That the church of which a Bishop had the care, is represented in the Epistles of *Ignatius*, as coming together to one place." This is without foundation. Letter vii. p. 187.

6. You say, that "the Fathers are not unanimous, but contradict one another." This is totally unfounded. They all make Episcopacy an Apostolical institution. Letter viii. p. 220, 221.

7. You assert, that *Timothy* and *Titus* acted as Evangelists at *Ephesus* and *Crete*. This assertion is unfounded. It has been shown that they could not possibly have acted as Evangelists, if we regard the etymology of the word; for the Gospel had been preached in both places before *Timothy* and *Titus* were sent to preside over them. Letter ix. p. 255, 256.

8. You assert, that the Reformers of the Church of *England* were Presbyterians in principle. This has been proved by abundant evidence to have no foundation. Letter xiv. *passim*.

9. Your assertion that ignorance prevailed in the second and third centuries, is groundless. It was very far from being the case. Letter xviii. p. 166, 167, 168, 169.

10. I have noticed in this *letter* your unfounded assertion, that *imparity* is a Popish doctrine, p. 278.

11. The summary in your last *letter* of the evidence contained in your book, is nothing but a string of unfounded assertions. Not one of the nine particulars which you enumerate has been proved, p. 280—285.

This I believe will be a sufficient sample of unfounded assertions.

Contradictions.

1. You contradict yourself. Letter xiii. p. 381.
2. You contradict your own *Confession of Faith*.
Ibid.
3. You contradict the Westminster Divines, Dr. *Mason*, and Mr. *M'Leod*. *Ibid.*
4. You contradict the scriptures. *Ibid.* p. 379.

Omissions.

You have omitted several direct, positive testimonies from *Jerome*, several from *Hilary*, two from *Isidore*, two from *Optatus*, one from *Athanasius*, one from *Theodoret*, two from *Epiphanius*, several from *Chrysostom*, and several from *Eusebius*; besides the testimonies of hundreds of Bishops met in General and Provincial Councils in the fourth century.

2. In the third century you have omitted the testimonies of *Alexander*, Bishop of *Jerusalem*, of *Cornelius*, and the Presbyters of the church of *Rome*, of *Origen*, and a volume of testimonies from *Cyprian*, and the Bishops of *Africa*; besides the testimony given to Episcopacy by the *Apostolical canons*.

3. In the second century, you have omitted the testimony of *Dionysius*, of *Polycrates*, and of *Hegesippus*.

4. In the first century you have omitted to notice the church of *Jerusalem*, which, from the scripture account, and the testimonies of the ancients, affords Episcopacy strong support.

I have now, Sir, said all that I think necessary to be said upon the question relating to the government of Christ's church. The subject will admit of a much ampler discussion, and it would be an easy matter to fill another volume with testimonies, and reasonings upon them; but I think enough has been done to convince those who will weigh with candour and impartiality the evidence adduced, that Episcopacy is an Apostolic and divine institution.

Although my patience has been severely tried by your manner of quoting authors, by several provoking hints and expressions, and by a management strikingly partial and unfair; yet I hope that I have not been hurried into any transgression of decorum. I certainly wished, while I spoke plainly, to avoid every thing that would unnecessarily hurt your feelings. When error is exposed, it must unavoidably have an unpleasant effect upon the mind of him who has fallen into it; but if, when exposing error, the manner of doing it be so harsh as to irritate the feelings of an opponent, it is censurable. That I am faulty in this respect, I am not conscious; but if you, Sir, perceive any thing of the kind, point it out, and it shall be immediately retracted. Or if I have done you injustice in any respect whatever, you have but to name it, and if it be really injus-

tice, I will readily acknowledge it to be so. To err degrades no man; but obstinately to persevere in error, is really disgraceful.

The series of Letters which I have now addressed to you, can certainly have no claim to freedom from defects. The circumstances under which they have been written, do not, I believe, often attend one who gives his thoughts to the public, upon such a variety of points as have occurred in this discussion. By far the greater part of these Letters have been written in the midst of my family, without having had recourse in a single instance, to solitary retirement, and but one of the whole series has been transcribed. My collegiate duties, too, have caused daily and almost hourly interruptions. A candid mind will not, therefore, be disposed to find fault with slight inaccuracies; but will place them among those things *quas incuria fudit*.

I shall now, Sir, take my leave of you, at least for a time. Whether I shall *ever* address you again, will entirely depend upon yourself. Should you be disposed for any further discussion of the subject, you will not find me unwilling to meet your wishes. When the church to which I have the happiness to belong is attacked, irksome as writing is at my time of life, I feel no backwardness to exert the little ability I possess, in her defence; and it af-

fords me no little pleasure to think, that I am at the same time defending the cause of almost every Christian church upon earth.

I am,

Reverend Sir,

With esteem and respect,

Your obedient humble servant,

JOHN BOWDEN.

Columbia College, July 15, 1808.

THE END.

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